Evaluation of the Investing in People Initiative — Year Two

FINAL REPORT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

NWT Investing in People is a joint federal-territorial Strategic Initiative being funded and managed by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE).

This report is the second of two evaluation reports on NWT Investing in People. The first report, Paying Dividends : An Evaluation of the Northwest Territories' Investing In People Strategic Initiative — Year One, was completed November 1995.

This evaluation study was conducted by Nichols Applied Management, The Genesis Group and Nunavut Consulting under the direction of the Evaluation Committee, comprised of representatives from the federal and territorial governments.

The evaluation team would like to thank all those who contributed to the study, especially officials in both the federal and territorial governments who gave of their time and experience.

The team would also like to thank the many project participants, sponsors, coordinators, instructors, workplace hosts and community members who generously shared information about the impact of NWT Investing in People on their lives and communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is the Investing in People Initiative?

Investing in People (IIP) is a two-year pilot project under the federal Strategic Initiatives. It is cost-shared by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and the department of Education, Culture, and Employment (ECE) and provides education and employment experiences and support services for people who are at risk of long-term social assistance dependency. IIP aims to move persons towards self-sufficiency.

In its second and final year of operation, IIP funded 59 projects with room for 688 training or work placement positions in 35 communities throughout the Northwest Territories (NWT). Twenty-nine of these projects are education-oriented Northern Skills Development Projects (NSDP) and 30 are more skill-based Work Activity Projects (WAP). All projects combine upgrading and skills training, life skills training, career and personal counselling, and work experience. NSDP projects emphasize upgrading and WAP projects focus on skills-based training.

In total, an estimated 900-950 people participated in IIP projects, as exits were replaced by new participants in some projects. This means that IIP involved some 8% of the total beneficiaries of the social assistance system. IIP also covered all regions of the NWT and provided projects in two-thirds of communities with populations over 100 persons.

YEAR TWO EVALUATION

The evaluation results presented here relate to the second and final year of the IIP initiative. The evaluation was conducted by a study team of Nichols Applied Management, Nunavut Consulting, and The Genesis Group, bringing together extensive experience in program evaluation, adult basic education, social service delivery, and community development. The evaluation is based on the following inputs:

- an extensive interview program with regional and head quarter staff of the government agencies involved, and 132 community key informants including project sponsors, instructors and community leaders;

- surveys of both project graduates and exits in all communities. Community-based researchers, trained and supported by Yellowknife-based consultants, completed a total of 341 questionnaires that could be used for quantitative analysis;

- three case studies in which study team members looked in detail at the projects in Rae Edzo, Inuvik, and Iqaluit;

- a review of file information and literature; and

- an analysis of social assistance data.

Does IIP Sponsor The Right Kind of Projects For The Right People?

IIP sponsors the right kind of projects. Almost 90% of key informants indicate that both the WAP projects, that are sponsored by community-based organizations, and the Colleges-based NSDP projects provide the type of educational and work experiences needed in the communities. The projects are in line with community needs despite the fact that only about a third of key informants state that the communities were sufficiently involved in their planning. These findings suggest that more involvement of the community at large should make the projects even more relevant to participants and their communities.

IIP focuses on persons who are at risk of long-term dependence on social assistance and IIP-funded projects by and large worked with the right target group. Other things being equal, young people and persons with limited education are at risk and survey results show that 64% of all participants are 29 years of age or younger and 50% have a grade 8 education or less.

Forty to fifty percent of participants did not complete their project. This appears high relative to other programs in the north. The exit rate indicates that the projects did not always select persons who were sufficiently motivated to participate. Exits report child care difficulties, personal issues, and issues related to the instructor among the main reasons for leaving projects.

None of these difficulties are unexpected and some can be fixed or improved easily. Child care difficulties will be fewer if child care allowances are provided when needed, although child care places will remain scarce in many communities. This needs closer cooperation between IIP and other parts of ECE or integration of child care allowances into projects similar to attendance allowances. Some instructor-related difficulties can be countered by increasing the emphasis that IIP placed on orientation of instructors and their timely arrival at the project site.

Personal issues are harder to deal with. More instructor orientation to life skills training and counselling, and closer integration of IIP projects with other support services, such as counselling and substance abuse treatment, should reduce exit rates.

IIP fills a programming gap in that it is an important part of the programming for social assistance recipients (SARs). Individual projects occasionally overlap with other programs or training activities. For example, IIP provided training to construction and retail workers, who would have received some training in any event. There is a clear potential for overlap between NSDP projects and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs run by the Colleges. However, much of the ABE programming, especially in the western Arctic, is funded only when the Colleges can find external sponsors. IIP fills this role for many communities.

Are IIP Projects Well Designed?

The roles and responsibilities with respect to project needs assessment and planning are well described by the IIP Program Handbook. This allocation of responsibilities leaves little room for the host communities, especially in project planning. This may account for the low level of satisfaction with the level of community involvement in projects, noted above.

The Colleges play a central role in the design of NSDP projects. This limits community input in NSDP projects to channels internal to the Colleges, with the result that NSDP projects were essentially given to the communities rather than generated by them. The involvement of a community-based organization gives WAP projects more room for community input. The community at large, however, in the form of a band council, claimant group, or other umbrella organizations tends not to be actively involved even with WAP projects.

All IIP projects provide a combination of upgrading, skills training, career and personal counselling, life skills training, and work experience. The type of work and the job skills training are the two most highly rated project components with

respect to graduate satisfaction. Classroom experience rates high as well. Work experience and classroom training are also singled out by graduates as the most useful program components. These findings clearly indicate that IIP's design, which combines upgrading/skills training and work placements, is appropriate.

Even though life skills training is among the least useful components from the point of view of graduates, it should be available to participants who need it. The target group in general has extensive life skills training needs and IIP projects build upon the experience of ABE programming, which includes life skills training as a matter of course. It should also be noted that graduates express a relatively high satisfaction with the life skills training they received. Because of the profile of the IIP target group, it is appropriate that IIP projects include as well career and personal counselling.

How are IIP projects implemented?

With respect to the implementation of the different components, the projects draw appropriately on existing ABE and life skills curriculum. There is not a lot of support material for work placements, outlining the expectations placed on work place hosts, participant orientation to the work placement, training goals and strategies, and feedback mechanisms. This lack of resources may have reduced the impact of work placements, although, even without this support, the work placements were very well received by participants.

Beyond resource materials, the implementation of all components depends crucially on the instructor and, in the case of WAP projects, the project coordinator. The positive impacts of the projects, discussed below, show that these key players did a commendable job. However, as mentioned, instructors are also among the main reasons people give for leaving projects. These observations reinforce the conclusion that instructors need to be supported with appropriate orientation and time to prepare for their tasks.

IIP has adequate financial systems in place to ensure appropriate payment and billing procedures. However, it lacks a management information system. Many projects did not provide timely and accurate information on, for example, exits and new intakes to the regional ECE offices. There is no system in place to gather management information and provide it in a meaningful form to the projects. It follows that the projects are managed without the benefit of comparative information and that head office management information needs — for example for the purposes of evaluation — are not easily met.

Participants receive $10 per day in addition to their social assistance allowance for each day they attend. Survey results indicate that the attendance allowance is not a key issue for many participants. Only 13% of graduates say that they entered the program because of the attendance allowance and only 13% of exits give the attendance allowance as a reason for leaving. In addition, 64% of graduates say that they would have participated if there were no attendance allowance.

These findings notwithstanding, the attendance allowance of at maximum $200 per month is significant for many IIP participants who live within very modest means. More importantly, the attendance allowance is a concrete example of the value that IIP places on participation. Seen as a celebration of participants' involvement and as part of encouraging this involvement, the attendance allowance should be retained.

Do IIP projects help participants?

Participants and key informants are generally very positive about the impact of the projects. For example, some 90% of key informants agree that the projects provided participants with useful experiences and helped them to gain knowledge and skills. The impacts, as reported by the participants, are positive in many ways. The information in the table below indicates that the projects helped both exits and graduates to feel better about themselves and their abilities, improve their education, and look for further training. Not unexpectedly, graduates consistently show a higher level of agreement with the impact statements posed to them as compared to the exits.

Participants' Perceptions of Project Impacts: Highest Impacts

Statements receiving highest level of agreement	Level of Agreement	
	Graduates	Exits
Encouraged me to get more education or take further training	88%	78%
Made me feel better about myself and my abilities	84%	72%
The program helped me to improve my education	80%	57%
Helped me become more independent/able to do things for myself	80%	73%
Improved my life skills	74%	64%

Note: Total number of respondents equals 341 (192 graduates and 149 exits).

Less than half of key informants agree with the statement that the projects helped participants with personal and family needs. The survey results support these observations: graduates indicate that personal counselling and life skills training were the least useful components of the projects, although the life skills

training did have positive impacts. In general, the evaluation findings indicate that IIP projects move people towards reduced dependence and that they were relatively more successful in improving skills than in dealing with personal issues.

The projects have a positive impact as well on their host communities. IIP reaches out to community-based organizations to sponsor WAP projects and all projects are by and large in line with community needs. They foster a level of inter-agency cooperation, at least in the early phase of their implementation, and a linkage between the training and work sectors of the local economies.

These positive impacts notwithstanding, only about a third of key informants express satisfaction with the level of community involvement with project planning and less than half say that they are satisfied with the level of community involvement generally.

What are the Costs and Benefits of IIP?

On average, IIP-Year 2 direct project costs are estimated at $5,800 to $6,100 per participant. The total social assistance payment to participants is marginally lower after the project as compared to the months leading up to it, but not enough to pay for the initiative in any reasonable time frame. This finding is not surprising in view of the fact that::

- IIP sets as its goal to move people towards reduced reliance on social assistance, not to move them into jobs; and
- the evaluation takes place only a short time after the completion of many projects, giving those participants who are job-ready insufficient time to find employment. Similarly, those participants who want to pursue further training did not have enough time to enroll in follow-on courses.

The benefits of IIP projects extend beyond the reduction in social assistance payments and include the initiative's impacts discussed above. These impacts are not quantified in monetary terms.

Beyond IIP

The evaluation of IIP Year 2 suggests a number of recommendations, including:

- more community involvement in the planning and execution of projects and amendment of planning timelines to allow for this;
- increased integration of the program with support services, such as child care allowances;
- more intense orientation of all people involved in the projects, including more instructor orientation to life skills training and counselling;
- retention of the attendance allowance and placing the allowance in the context of celebrating participants' involvement in projects;
- development of support materials to aid the implementation of work placements;
- development of a management information system that will assist day-to-day management of the projects and aid in ongoing self-monitoring; and
- increased linkages to other training and work placement opportunities for project graduates to make participants' training paths more seamless.

The IIP Year 2 evaluation can be interpreted in the context of future programming, specifically the move towards community-based program delivery.

Future programming should build on a key IIP strength: the integration of a number of different services, such as ABE, work placement, personal and career counselling, and life skills training. It should extend the inter-agency cooperation that started around IIP projects, especially in their start-up phases. The multi-faceted nature of many IIP projects gave different agencies a common focus and a reason to talk with each other rather than to regional or head office staff within agencies.

Future programming should place more emphasis on dealing with personal and family problems for those participants who need that assistance. The IIP evaluation suggests that integrating services more closely and moving towards community-based services may make programming more responsive to personal and community development needs.

Future programming will need stronger information systems. IIP has adequate financial but no management information systems. Both types of systems are needed for the effective management of programs. Systems that provide

relevant information for the day-to-day management of programs and that relate directly to the programs' accountability framework may increase the incentive to gather the information. More community ownership of programming — which removes the distance between the person gathering the data and the agency for which the data is gathered — will likely be a further incentive.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is pleased to receive the Evaluation of the Investing in People Initiative— Year Two. We support the recommendations in the report and, where possible, will act on them to improve future programs. We agree with the findings that community involvement and interagency cooperation are key to creating successful, relevant programs for social assistance recipients. We are working with communities to increase control of programs at the local level.

Many of the lessons learned from Investing in People are already being incorporated into the Income Support program and other departmental initiatives. Some of these changes directly address concerns raised in the report. For example:

- much of Investing in People funding has been regionalized, to bring program decision making closer to communities; child care subsidies have also been regionalized;

- a management information sysem is being developed which will track clients' progress in programs and provide information useful for monitoring and evaluating the impacts of programs; and

- a career development certificate is being offered for adult educators and income support workers to familiarize community staff with the field of career development and career development skills.

We believe that the research contained in this document is very valuable, and lays the groundwork for further research in important areas. For example, we must better determine the long term costs and benefits of educational programming for social assistance recipients beyond a social assistance expenditure reduction model.

As a Department, we recognize the necessity of providing programs that increase productive choices for individuals on Social Assistance. As a result, we committed to supporting Investing in People projects for an additional two year period, although the federal Strategic Initiatives contribution from the first two years has ceased.

Although finalizing the report was a lengthy process, we are pleased that the evaluation indicates that Investing in People projects have had positive impacts on individuals and communities. The executive summary will be forwarded to all

the IIP stakeholders at the community and regional level, and we hope that the findings will be useful to all our partners who are designing and delivering educational programs.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 STUDY BACKGROUND

Various income security reform initiatives are being pursued throughout Canada at this time. One of the key initiatives in the Northwest Territories is Investing in People, a two-year initiative which is funded and managed jointly by the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Human Resources Development Canada under the Strategic Initiatives Program announced by the federal government in February, 1994.[1]

The overall intention of Strategic Initiatives is to support innovative projects directed at reducing dependency on social programs and to gather information upon which to base future social policy and program design decisions.

The barriers to self-sufficiency faced by many social assistance recipients in communities throughout the Northwest Territories (NWT) are many and varied. They include low education and skill levels, conditions of widespread and long-term dependency on social assistance, limited local employment and training opportunities and role models, child care responsibilities, abandonment of traditional pursuits, addictions, and health and personal problems. IIP is directed at meeting the substantial and complex needs of social assistance

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[1] This document uses a number of different programs, positions, and agencies that are commonly referred to by their acronym only. Following is a listing of acronyms used throughout the document.

Agency/Program/Position	Acronym
Adult Basic Education	ABE
Career Development Officer	CDO
Community Social Services Worker	CSSW
Canada Employment and Immigration Commission	CEIC
Education, Culture, and Employment	ECE
Financial Management Board Secretariat	FMBS
Government of the Northwest Territories	GNWT
Health and Social Services	H&SS
Human Resources Development Canada	HRDC
Investing in People	IIP
Northern Skills Development Project	NSDP
Social Assistance Recipient	SAR
Territorial Training Plan	TTP
Work Activity Project	WAP

recipients in the NWT to enhance their potential to become self-sufficient and contribute to the development of their communities.

The projects supported under the IIP initiative fall into two categories: Work Activity Projects, which are employment-focused projects delivered mostly by community-based organizations; and Northern Skills Development Programs delivered by Nunavut Arctic College and Aurora College. NSDP projects are more specifically focused on meeting the educational upgrading needs of participants.[2]

IIP-Year 2 has supported the delivery of 29 NSDP projects and 30 WAP projects in 35 communities throughout the NWT.[3] These projects provided 688 training or work placement positions during the 1995/96 final year of the initiative, extending in some cases into 1996/97. The expenditures relating to the initiative in its second year were approximately $4.8 million with an additional $1.2 million allocated to projects that are still ongoing in the 1996/97 fiscal year. The expenditures in the first year of IIP were approximately $1.3 million.

An evaluation of the IIP initiative was conducted after its first year of operation.[4] In April 1996, the initiative partners, the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment and Human Resources Development Canada, engaged Nichols Applied Management of Edmonton, in association with the NWT-based The Genesis Group and Nunavut Consulting, to conduct an evaluation of the performance of the initiative's second year of operation and address the following:

- the relevancy of the IIP initiative;
- the adequacy of the design and delivery of the initiative;
- the impact of IIP projects on participants and the communities in which they were delivered; and,
- the cost effectiveness of the IIP initiative.

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2 ECE, *Investing in People Handbook*, November 1995, page 5.

3 Approval was granted to extend some of the Investing in People projects beyond th e scheduled September 30, 1996 finish date.

4 Terriplan Consultants and Martin Spiegelman Research Associates, *Paying Dividends: An Evaluation of the Investing in People Program — Year One*, November 1995.

This report documents the Year 2 evaluation.

1.2 Format of the Report

The approach taken to this evaluation is described in Section 2 of this report. A more detailed description of the methodology and evaluation instruments used is provided in a Technical Appendix under separate cover.

Section 3 provides background information about IIP, its objectives and intended target group; the context in which it is delivered; its design and the individual projects supported under the initiative.

The evaluation team's findings and conclusions about the IIP initiative are contained in Section 4. Section 5 presents the study team's comments on the lessons that the IIP evaluation may present for future programming and the recommendations flowing from this evaluation are presented in Section 6.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

This evaluation was overseen by the Investing in People Evaluation Committee which included representatives of ECE, FMBS, and HRDC. The evaluation began at the end of April, 1996. The survey administration extended into September and the evaluation team met with the Evaluation Committee in mid-September to review the initial draft report. The comments on that draft report and a subsequent one are reflected in this report.

The information used for this evaluation was gathered from several sources, including:

- initial interviews with members of the IIP Management Committee and senior officials within ECE;
- available program background documents and reports, including the report from the IIP Year 1 evaluation;
- interviews with Regional Superintendents in ECE, as well as selected regional staff members of HRDC;
- in-depth case studies of the operation of the IIP projects in the communities of Rae Edzo, Inuvik, and Iqaluit;
- surveys of project participants, including participants who completed their projects as well as participants who withdrew from IIP projects before their scheduled completicn dates;[5]
- interviews with 132 selected key informants in the communities where IIP projects were delivered, including project sponsors, community social workers and career development officers, work place hosts, instructors, municipal officials and band representatives; and,
- an analysis of social assistance payment data.

Table 2.1.1 at the end of this section presents an overview of the sources of information used to address the evaluation questions that shaped this research.

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[5] The balance of the report will use "graduate" to refer to people who were enrolled in th e projects at their conclusion. Peopl e who did not complete their program will be referred to as "exits" and the word "participant" will be used to cover both graduates and exits.

As shown in the table, the evaluation relies extensively on a survey of graduates and exits. These surveys were administered in person by community-based researchers, supported in the western and eastern Arctic by consultants of The Genesis Group and Nunavut Consulting, respectively. In total, 358 participants, 202 graduates and 156 exits, were interviewed, constituting 80% of the targeted 446 participant interviews.[6] Of these 358 completed questionnaires, 341 were used as part of the data analysis. The balance, 16 questionnaires completed by inmates and one questionnaire filled in by a group of six intellectually challenged participants, were not included because their situation is deemed to be too different from that of other participants.

The 80% completion rate is high considering the challenges of surveying in the north. The number of responses provides an acceptable accuracy level with respect to survey responses — discussed below — and was only possible due to the use of mostly aboriginal community-based researchers, backed-up by NWT-based consultants. Any other methodology — e.g. phone surveys or surveys by non-resident interviewers — would have increased the cost of surveying and, more importantly, reduced the quantity and quality of the information gathered. In addition, by hiring community-based researchers, the evaluation itself contributed to the further development of community-based research capabilities and provided employment opportunities for local residents. Further detail about the research methodology is provided in the Technical Appendix.

An integral component of this evaluation was an intensive three-day working meeting of all of the key members of the evaluation team during which the findings were analyzed, conclusions were drawn in respect of the various evaluation issues, and preliminary recommendations were formulated. This working meeting allowed the evaluation team to analyze the evaluation information from a number of different perspectives resident within the group. These perspectives include:

- evaluation of employment enhancement programs;
- social service delivery in the NWT;
- adult education; and

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[6] The terms of reference for this study describes the target number of interviews: as many completions as there are IIP-funded training or work placement spots in Category I communities and completions equal to 30% of IIP funded positions in Category II communities. The division of communities into Category I or II was done randomly and for the purposes of this evaluation only.

- community development and community wellness.

The make-up of the study team allowed it to provide an integrated view on IIP in its context in the NWT.

2.2 Survey Accuracy Levels

The determination of accuracy levels, that is, the degree of confidence that can be placed in the survey findings representing the opinions and activities of the entire population of IIP participants during the period April 1995 to August 1996, is complicated by the fact that many projects took in new participants to fill training or work placement spots vacated by exits. The continuous intake, together with an absence of consistent and reliable participant records, discussed in more detail below, makes an exact statement of the number of IIP participants impossible. The study team estimates that the total number of participants lies between 900 and 950. Using these estimates, the achieved accuracy level is between plus or minus 4 and 4.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. In the view of the consultants, this level of survey accuracy is sufficient to provide meaningful information about participants and their views about and experiences with IIP projects. The Technical Appendix provides further detail about the survey methodology and accuracy levels.

2.3 Evaluation Limitations

Limitations to this evaluation which should be recognized include:

- the long term impact of the initiative including the post-project reliance of participants on social assistance cannot be assessed yet due to the short period between the end of most projects and the evaluation activities;

- some key informants who could have made valuable contributions to this evaluation were unavailable when the community interviews were conducted and the community researchers were unable to contact some of the participants in communities;

- the scope of this evaluation and the vast geographic area over which the IIP projects are dispersed did not allow the principal members of the evaluation team to visit many of the communities that had IIP projects so that they could observe first-hand the strengths and shortcomings of the projects;

- in addition to qualitative information gathered from key informants, the evaluation relies to a considerable extent on surveys of graduates and exits. These surveys probe how the respondents assess their own involvement in IIP projects.[7]

These observations notwithstanding, the volume and quality of the information that the study team was able to gather suggest the appropriateness of the chosen methodologies, especially the extensive use of community-based researchers.

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[7] The Evaluation Committee discussed the use of comparison group methodology for th e purposes of this evaluation. This methodology, which would have depended less on sel f assessment than the survey methodology used, was rejected because of anticipated difficulties with securing sufficient numbers of participants for both the study and comparison groups and for budgetary reasons.

Table 2.1.1
Overview of Evaluation Questions and Related Information Sources

Evaluation Questions	Document/ File Review	Interviews	Graduate Survey	Exit Survey	Case Studies	Analysis of Program/ Social Assistance Data
Relevancy of Program						
What is the intended target group? Did IIP reach its intended target group? Were there enough eligible participants for each project?	X	X			X	
Is there a common understanding of the intended target group? Are program referrals appropriate?	X	X	X	X	X	
Are the IIP projects serving appropriate clients? What are the demographic characteristics/barriers to self-sufficiency of participants/non-completers/non-participants? How does the profile of participants compare with the profile of the intended target group?	X	X	X	X	X	X
How satisfied are participants with various aspects of IIP projects? Do they consider projects to be beneficial?			X	X		
What proportion of IIP project participants left before their anticipated completion date? What are the main reasons for leaving?	X	X		X		X
Why do some eligible social assistance recipients not participate?		X			X	
What is the "fit" between IIP projects and community development plans/aspirations? Other community development initiatives?	X	X				
Project Design and Delivery						
What are the strengths and weaknesses of the IIP projects' organizational structure? Were all the partners/staff satisfied with the processes used?	X	X			X	
Have any operational, legislative, regulatory, or jurisdictional constraints been identified that impinge on the ability of IIP to achieve its objectives?	X	X			X	
What tracking, monitoring mechanisms have been put in place? Was the information appropriate and adequate?	X	X			X	
What are the roles and responsibilities relating to the delivery of IIP projects? Are these clear? Are these appropriate?	X	X			X	
How are client needs identified? How is client needs assessment information used in designing IIP projects?	X	X	X	X	X	
What services or interventions are provided? (assessment, career/personal counselling, life skills training, academic upgrading, job skills training, work experience, child care, transportation, housing, addiction treatment, job support, other)	X	X	X	X	X	
Are communities involved in decisions about IIP projects? In what ways?	X	X			X	
Are the standards or indicators of program success clear? Understood? Appropriate?	X	X			X	

Evaluation Questions	Document/ File Review	Interviews	Graduate Survey	Exit Survey	Case Studies	Analysis of Program/ Social Assistance Data
Are work experiences relevant to jobs in local communities? What kind of labour market information is gathered? How is this information used in designing IIP projects?		X	X	X		
Are IIP design features consistent with stated objectives of the IIP initiative?	X	X				
Is the IIP attendance incentive allowance appropriate? How does it compare with other allowances? Were other sources of funding needed and available to provide participants with the support services they needed to participate (e.g. day care, transportation support)?		X	X	X		
Impacts						
What impact did the IIP projects have on participants? Non-completers? To what extent have IIP projects removed disincentives to employment and training (e.g. changing SA regulations, providing day care, etc.) or provided greater access to training and employment projects/programs? Have IIP projects contributed to improvements in participants' personal lives?		X	X	X	X	
To what extent have the IIP projects assisted participants to become more self-sufficient, both in an economic and personal sense? Consider: increased motivation and self-esteem; development of a career action plan; participation in other training or employment initiatives; provided with job search, job retention, occupational skills (generic, job specific); provided with mentoring, positive role models; raised education levels; reduced reliance on social assistance; changed participant attitudes about dependency/self-sufficiency.			X	X	X	X
Which program components have the greatest impact on participants?		X	X	X		
Did the IIP projects contribute to community development? (establishment of partnerships/strengthening of relationships between land claims groups, GNWT departments, employers, other levels of government) Did the IIP projects support Community Transfer initiatives?		X			X	
Did the IIP projects change employers' attitudes toward hiring social assistance recipients?		X				
Have the IIP Initiative/IIP projects contributed to a stronger integration of services for the target group? (At the territorial level? At the community level?)		X			X	
Cost Effectiveness						
What are the Project's benefits and costs? To what extent has the IIP project contributed to reduced SA expenditures? How do the financial benefits and costs for the outcomes achieved compare with the results found in other evaluations for similar programs? Do the IIP projects contribute to reduced costs through the more efficient delivery of services in communities?	X	X	X	X	X	X
	X	X	X	X	X	X
How could the Project's cost-effectiveness be enhanced?		X			X	
Did the community become more aware of career development?	X	X			X	
Are IIP projects over administered?	X	X			X	

Evaluation Questions	Document/ File Review	Interviews	Graduate Survey	Exit Survey	Case Studies	Analysis of Program/ Social Assistance Data
Policy						
Is the implementation of the IIP project in alignment with the Strategic Initiatives?	X	X	X	X	X	X
Is adequate information about the performance of the IIP project being gathered to support decisions about future directions for the project, specifically, and social reform, generally?	X	X			X	X
What are the strengths of the IIP project that can be applied to other programs in the NWT or elsewhere? What are the program's shortcomings that should be considered in formulating policy or designing/modifying programs?	X	X	X	X	X	X

3.0 INVESTING IN PEOPLE INITIATIVE

This section provides a brief description of the IIP initiative and the environment in which it operates. It is descriptive in nature. Evaluation findings are presented in Section 4.

3.1 MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The November 1995 Program Handbook for Investing in People provides the following mission statement for the initiative:

- *"The Investing in People initiative helps social assistance clients achieve self-sufficiency through education, work experience and support services.*

  Through the cooperation of GNWT departments and their community based partners, this initiative will encourage independence and self-determination and will result in long term social and financial benefits."

The initiative was intended to meet the following stated goals:

- to integrate and link social assistance with employment and career development programs and services;
- to foster the independence, self-determination and well-being of participants; and,
- to decrease participants' dependency on social assistance.

The stated objectives were:

- to provide social assistance recipients with the education, job search skills, job continuation skills, and effective support systems needed to compete more effectively for jobs or to continue formal education;
- to develop programs which increase the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at social assistance clients;
- to enable program participants to implement personal career plans;
-

- to develop partnerships with other levels of government, land claims groups, other GNWT departments, and private and non-profit sectors; and,

- to support community development.

The IIP initiative reflects a general shift in Canada's social security system from passive support to assistance that focuses on helping social assistance recipients to achieve independence and self-sufficiency. The program also reflects a trend toward more integrated service delivery to SARs and the increasing recognition that social security programming can play an important role in advancing community, and ultimately national, social and economic development goals.

3.2 IIP Context

An assessment of the IIP initiative requires an understanding of the complex environment in which it is delivered and the important and rapid changes that are taking place in that environment. Following is a summary statement of key features of the social, political and economic environment in which IIP operates:

- the distribution of the NWT's relatively small population over a huge geographic area. Most of the communities in the NWT are small and geographically isolated. For example, only 13 of 61 communities have populations in excess of 1,000[8] and the vast majority do not have all weather road access;

- the significant rise in the level of social assistance expenditures in the NWT over the past thirty years and the very high levels of dependency in many communities.[9] Figures 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 show the growth of the social assistance caseload in the past six years and the regional distribution of that caseload;

- the severity of the social problems in many communities as reflected in high levels of violence, suicide, and substance abuse. However, there is also growing determination on the part of communities to address their social problems and the

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[8] Statistics Canada 1991 Census.

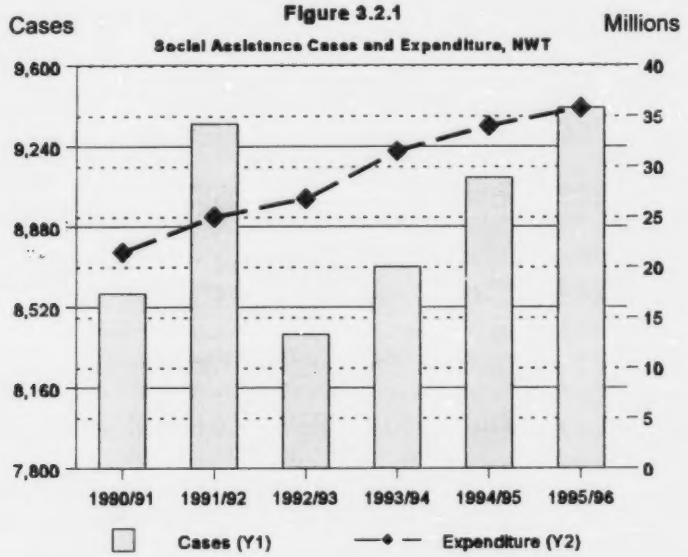
[9] See, for example, Department of Education, Culture, and Employment, *Income Security Reform*, March 1994, and Department of Education, Cultur e, and Employment, *Education and Training for Adults in the NWT*, 1994 and Terriplan Consultants and Martin Spiegelma n Research Associates, *Paying Dividends: An Evaluation of the Investing in People Program — Year One*, November 1995.

growing recognition that community wellness requires family wellness, which, in turn, depends on individual wellness;[10]

- the cultural diversity within the NWT. The eight different official languages and traditions in communities have a bearing on the appropriateness of social programming in communities;

- a lack of jobs in the wage economy in many communities on the one hand and, on the other hand a renewed interest in participating in traditional pursuits that can reduce dependency and enhance personal and community well-being;

Figure 3.2.1



- the low education and occupational skill levels of a significant proportion of the social assistance recipients in the NWT as evidenced by the estimated 65% of social assistance recipients in the NWT who have a Grade 8 education or less;[11]

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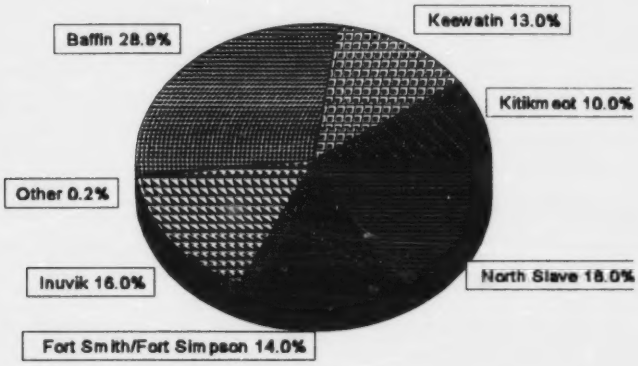
10 See, for example, Community Wellness Task Team, *Outline for a Community Action Plan*, Draft, May 1996.

11 Department of Education, Culture, and Employment, *Income Security Reform*, March 1994.

Figure 3.2.2
Regional Distribution of Social Assistance Cases, NWT 1995/9



- the upcoming establishment of Nunavut and the high level of commitment on the part of the GNWT and the Government of Canada to provide opportunities to prepare northerners for the jobs that will be created;

- the fragmented nature of the federal and territorial social and economic development programs delivered at the community level. There appears to be a continuing effort to coordinate and integrate service delivery at the community level and in doing so enhance the level of service in such areas as adult basic education, personal and career counselling, and child care;

- the shift in the direction of the GNWT to respond to the long-standing desire of many communities to have more authority with respect to the delivery of social and economic development programs. The current Community Empowerment initiative will allow communities to have more authority to design and deliver programs to respond to their unique community needs and priorities.[12]

Taken together, it is clear that the IIP initiative operates in a complex and dynamic environment.

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[12] See, for example, *Community Empowerment, Defining Community Opportunities an d Territorial Interests*. Draft, dated April 23, 1996.

3.3 Design, Delivery, and Participant Eligibility

All IIP projects, whether they are education-focused NSDPs or the more employment-focused WAPs, provide a combination of basic education, upgrading or skill training, life skills training, counselling, and a work experience opportunity. The project designs also include a process for assessing, selecting and orienting participants. Optional project components include traditional knowledge and aboriginal language instruction and cultural and recreational activities. The projects are between three and nine months in duration.

Project participants remain on social assistance while they are involved in IIP projects. In addition to social assistance, participants receive:

- an allowance of $10 for each day that they attend. This attendance allowance is paid by the project; and
- child care or transportation allowances in cases where such support is needed to allow clients to participate.[13]

NSDPs are sponsored by Aurora College and Nunavut Arctic College. WAPs are sponsored by businesses or organizations that are either community-based or have operations there.

IIP projects are built around teamwork and incorporate the collaborative efforts of project sponsors, CSSWs and CDOs, and representatives of key groups with a stake in the social and economic development of the communities. The goals and objectives of IIP are not prescriptive with respect to the type of project that will be considered. This flexibility resulted in a considerable variation among Year-2 projects, which range from a small engine repair course to entry level guide training and from a parenting program to training in silkscreening and graphic design. Table 3.4.1 provides an overview of the Year-2 projects.

To be eligible to participate, participants must meet the following criteria:

- be a resident of the NWT and the community in which a project was to be delivered;
- be at least 17 years old and no longer in school;

[13] The availability of child care is limited in many communit ies and this limitation is acknowledged by IIP. However, IIP projects do not provide child care spaces and any references to child care in the context of this evaluation relate only to the child care allowances for which II P participants are eligible.

- be presently on, or eligible for, social assistance and at risk of long term or recurring unemployment;
- be actively seeking to upgrade their education and acquire new skills and choose, voluntarily, to participate in the projects;
- present barriers to self-sufficiency that could be addressed by the projects; and,
- not have substance abuse problems.

The program handbook outlines that the selection of project participants is the responsibility of a committee chaired by the project sponsor and including representatives of H&SS and ECE. Other persons can participate as requested by the committee.[14] The structure of IIP furthermore includes the idea that these committees review project progress and address any issues as they arise.

The overall IIP initiative is overseen by a Management Committee that includes representatives of ECE and HRDC. The Evaluation Committee reports to the Management Committee.

3.4 Overview of Year Two IIP Projects

Table 3.4.1 presents a summary overview of the IIP projects supported during the second year of the IIP initiative. This table illustrates the wide variety of IIP projects and indicates as well the wide variety of skills training that was undertaken, including cooking, retail store operations, small engine repair, traditional harvesting techniques, basic construction, and biology research.

The participant numbers shown in Table 3.4.1 are based on the training or work placement positions in each of the projects as indicated in the project proposals and contribution agreements.

[14] ECE, *Investing in People Program Handbook* , November 1995.

Table 3.4.1
Overview of Year Two IIP Projects

Name of Project	Community(ies)	Region	Description	Sponsor(s)	Participants	Year Two Funding
Northern Skills Development Program	Yellowknife (3 projects) Rae Edzo N'dilo	North Slave	Upgrading, work experience placements, life skills training and counselling.	Aurora College and Nunavut Arctic College	307	$2,811,559
	Lutsel K'e Hay River Fort Liard Fort Simpson	South Slave				
	Tuktoyaktuk Fort Good Hope Inuvik Colville Lake Tulita Tsiigehtchic	Inuvik				
	Repulse Bay Rankin Inlet Baker Lake Chesterfield Inlet	Keewatin				
	Coppermine Pelly Bay Gjoa Haven	Kitikmeot				
	Iqaluit Cape Dorset Igloolik Pangnirtung Broughton Island Pond Inlet Resolute Bay	Baffin				
Aklavik Work Activity Project	Aklavik	Inuvik	Life skills (2 weeks), upgrading (5 weeks), counselling, and work experience in a cafe, emphasizing cooking/baking skills and customer service.	Aklavik Aboriginal Committee	15	$126,000
Success at Work IIP Project	Fort Good Hope	Inuvik	Life skills, upgrading, and Life Management Skills Leader Training, work experience.	Charter Community Council, K'asho Got'ine	15	$196,080

Name of Project	Community(ies)	Region	Description	Sponsor(s)	Participants	Year Two Funding
Inuvik Work Activity Project	Inuvik	Inuvik	Life Skills provided by the Native Women's Centre, upgrading, some job skills training (trades, tourism, business), and work experience.	Inuvik Community Transfer Committee	20	$161,000
Kitikmeot Work Activity Project	Cambridge Bay	Kitikmeot	Parenting/Child Development Program. Work experience in conjunction with students in Nunavut Arctic College Childhood Development Program in day care and kindergarten.	Kitikmeot Inuit Association	12	$130,118
Taluq Designs	Taloyoak	Kitikmeot	Life skills training, and training in the technical and management aspects of an arts and crafts/sewing business.	Talugroak Crafts Ltd.	10	$124,791
Parenting Project	Lutsel K'e	South Slave	Training of parenting support group facilitators.	Lutsel k'e Dene Band	9	$27,036
Pre-Employment Mine Training	Lutsel K'e	South Slave	Pre-employment mine training using Aurora College curriculum, work place literacy skills, and work placement with BHP.	Lutsel k'e Dene Band	15	$85,345
Personal Development and Skills Training Program	Fort Smith	South Slave	Provision of an holistic approach to assist mothers to discover and develop work skills, traditional knowledge and personal knowledge. Designed for involvement of both mothers and children.	Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre	10	$69,554
Northern Community Cabaret Work Activity Project	Hay River	South Slave	Academic upgrading, job search skills, personal life management through drama, and work experience in hospitality industry. Provision of entertainment for members of the community.	Aurora College	11	$29,560
Guide Development Training Program	Cape Dorset	Baffin	Entry level guide training covering industry knowledge, leadership and communication, lifestyle and service skills, travel and camp skills, safety and first aid, tour administration, big game hunting, and ecotourism interpretive guiding.	Aiviq Hunters and Trappers Association and the municipality of Cape Dorset	5	$112,000

Name of Project	Community(ies)	Region	Description	Sponsor(s)	Participants	Year Two Funding
Seal Harvesting Techniques and Value Added Processing	Igloolik	Baffin	Training in harvesting, processing and use of seal meat and fur.	Igloolik Hunters and Trappers Association and the Inullariit Society of Igloolik	13	$70,595
Asivaqtiit Traditional Skills Program 1996	Iqaluit	Baffin	Training in traditional skills including qamutik and igloo building, firearm safety, first aid, navigational skills, camping, small engine repair, trapping, fishing, seal hunting, and survival skills. Also included life skills and job search skills.	Kakivak Association	12	$129,895
Small Engine Repair Program	Iqaluit	Baffin	Training in small engine repair.	BCC Inmate Welfare Fund c/o Baffin Correctional Centre	20	$20,000
Marine Resource (Kelp) Assessment and Seamanship Training	Whale Cove	Keewatin	Training in life skills, first aid, swimming and water safety, kelp assessment, seamanship, and career planning.	Kivalliq Land and Sea Resources Ltd.	6	$32,294
Renewable Resource Planning and Technician Training	Whale Cove	Keewatin	Training in life skills, first aid, swimming, entry level biological technical skills in Arctic marine resource industries, plant surveying techniques, development of marine resource based products.	Kivalliq Land and Sea Resources Ltd.	6	$50,000
Jesse Oonark 1995 Job Site	Baker Lake	Keewatin	Upgrading, life skills, and training in silkscreening, graphic art design, sewing, and production management.	Jesse Oonark Ltd.	10	$170,439
Career and Production Skills Training Program	Rankin Inlet	Keewatin	Life skills, sewing machine maintenance and repair, and sewing skills and production management training.	Ivalu Ltd.	9	$50,953
Nuksutet Sewing Group Training Program	Repulse Bay	Keewatin	Life skills, sewing skills, and traditional and modern clothing and craft manufacturing training.	Nuksutet Sewing Group	5	$32,804

Name of Project	Community(ies)	Region	Description	Sponsor(s)	Participants	Year Two Funding
Soapstone Carving Course	Repulse Bay	Keewatin	Training in quarrying, tool use, carving, business management and life skills.	Hamlet of Repulse Bay	11	$91,328
Arviat "Stoneworks" Business Project Soapstone Carving Course	Arviat	Keewatin	Training in production of souvenir products, upgrading, life skills, and job readiness.	NWT Development Corporation	20	$56,000
Gameti Work Activity Project	Rae Lakes	North Slave	Upgrading, life skills, and work experience.	Rae Lakes Community Education Council	12	$111,529
Tourism Industry Entry Level Program	Wha Ti	North Slave	Training in tourism and hospitality, life skills, work experience (8 weeks).	Dene Meni Cooperative Association Ltd.	16	$85,997
Snare Cascades Hydroelectric Project	Rae Edzo	North Slave	Training in carpentry, construction safety, first aid and life skills.	PCL-Monenco AGRA	30	$34,330
Native Women's Work Activity Training	Yellowknife	North Slave	Upgrading, life skills, pre-employment and computer training.	Native Women's Association	12	$54,000
Yellowknife Association for Community Living Support Work Placement and Training Program	Yellowknife	North Slave	Training in skills used in the food service industry for intellectually challenged participants.	Yellowknife Association for Community Living	6	$3,070
Project Change	Yellowknife	North Slave	Academic upgrading, life skills, job readiness and job search training for youth aged 16-25.	Learning Disability Association of the Northwest Territories	10	$63,889
Skills Development, Upgrading and Personal Management Skills	Yellowknife	North Slave	First aid and life skills training and career orientation. Project involved shadow-training participants in the fields of tourism, health care, and fund raising.	Yellowknife Metis Council	4	$19,422
Rae Co-op Training Program	Rae and Yellowknife	North Slave	Training in operation and management of a grocery store.	Aurora College	3	$20,000
Future Options Careers Upgrading Skills (Focus)	Yellowknife	North Slave	Pre-employment training for young, single mothers. Upgrading, life skills training, and parenting skills training.	YWCA	12	$150,050
Wha Ti Work Activity Project	Wha Ti	North Slave	Academic upgrading, life skills training, and work placement.	Wha Ti Community Education Council	10	$56,995

4.0 EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This section of the report presents the detailed evaluation findings and the study team's assessment of them. The section is subdivided into four parts, which discuss in turn the relevance of the initiative, its design and implementation, its impacts, and the costs as compared to the benefits.

Throughout this section, the information is presented on the basis of graduates and exits or participants where appropriate. The text indicates those instances where there are statistically significant differences between groups within these categories, such as NSDP versus WAP or East versus West.

4.1 Relevance

Relevance captures a range of questions with respect to the appropriateness of the initiative on a number of different levels: that of the participants, their communities, and NWT and Canada-wide social policy.

4.1.1 IIP in the Context of the Federal Strategic Initiatives

Background

IIP is one of the programs sponsored under the umbrella of the federal Strategic Initiatives. Key to Strategic Initiatives is the search for new ways to deliver income support and training.

Findings

As stated in Section 3, the goals of the IIP initiative are:

- to integrate and link social assistance with employment and career development programs and services;
- to foster participants' independence, self-determination, and well-being; and

- to decrease participants' dependency on social assistance.

The IIP initiative helps participants achieve self sufficiency through education, work experience and support services, recognizing full well that for many participants this will be a long-term undertaking.

IIP sponsors two types of projects, NSDPs and WAPs. The NSDPs rely extensively on existing ABE curriculum. NSDPs are different from the Colleges' ABE programming in that they include explicitly personal and career counselling, and work placements. The work placements especially are a new design feature for training services as compared to ABE programming of the Colleges.

The WAPs are designed individually by the project sponsors and vary considerably. Central to all WAP designs is the importance of work placements, supported by skills-based training and upgrading, personal life management, and career and personal counselling. The WAPs echo the experience with programming for SARs in the NWT under the Canada Assistance Plan, when programming that aimed to provide specific work skills to persons with handicaps was opened up by making all SARs eligible. The design of most WAPs goes beyond the experience of the late 1980s and early 1990s by explicitly incorporating career and personal counselling.

Conclusion

The IIP initiative is conducted in the context of Strategic Initiatives' search for new ways to provide a social safety net for Canadians. The study team is impressed by the fact that IIP does not limit its definition of "reduced dependency on social assistance" to a narrow job or employment focus. A strict job focus is not meaningful in the context of many communities in the NWT. IIP's goal of generally fostering participants' independence appears to us entirely appropriate in the context of limited job opportunities and considerable social dislocation.

IIP introduces as well modest innovations built into the design of the NSDPs and WAPs. They build on existing northern experience and resource materials (ABE and life skills curriculum and a history of work placements under the SAR program) and integrate them in a multi-faceted approach: the NSDPs incorporate work placements and most WAPs classroom training.

4.1.2 Target Group

Background

The IIP program focuses on persons who are on, or who are eligible to be on, social assistance. Eligibility criteria are stated in Section 3.3. Were these criteria interpreted in a uniform manner?

Findings

Although the eligibility criteria define potential participants quite precisely, the field work conducted in the context of this evaluation suggests that there are some differences of opinion regarding the target group of the initiative. Key informant interviews and the case studies — described in the Technical Appendix — indicate at least two nuances in the definition of the target group. Some people, and this was perhaps most noticeable in persons involved in NSDPs in the eastern Arctic, see the IIP initiative as a possibility to reach out to persons with very low levels of educational attainment who are poorly covered by other programming. Others want to focus on those SARs who are almost job ready.

These nuances are reflected in the evolution of the eligibility criteria that individual projects used, such as easing of the originally hard and fast rule that people with substance abuse problems were not eligible. In its original formulation, this eligibility criteria seriously hampered the recruitment of participants, leading to a more liberal interpretation of eligibility. Changes in eligibility criteria also took place with respect to limiting the project intake to persons who were on social assistance at least three months to the more general criterion of persons who are at risk of long term or recurring unemployment, while still eligible for or on social assistance.

Information from the Iqaluit case studies indicates that at least some people think that the program should not have excluded persons who were not on, or not eligible for, social assistance. They suggested that from a community perspective, the impact of the program may have been limited by its eligibility criteria.

Conclusion

The fairly subtle differences regarding the definition of the target group did not have a significant negative impact on the initiative, although individual projects

at times struggled with them. Broadening the criteria with respect to persons with substance abuse problems appears reasonable in cases where recruitment would have been hampered otherwise. Opening projects to persons with substance abuse problems increases the challenges faced by instructors and there is anecdotal evidence from the case studies of some disruptive behaviour in classes. Issues around eligibility and substance abuse underline the need for strong integration of support services.

4.1.3 Participants' Profile

Background

The question to what extent IIP reaches its target group is, in part, answered by analyzing the participants' profile. This profile should reflect that of the target group. Additional insights into this question can be gained from analyzing the initiative's geographic coverage and target group penetration. The former analysis is presented here and the latter in Section 4.1.4, Project Coverage. Related information on the extent to which the services provided are consistent with the needs of the target group is presented in Section 4.2.2, Appropriateness of Project Components and Section 4.2.3, Satisfaction by Project Component.

Findings

Table 4.1.1 presents the participant profile information gathered through the surveys administered as part of this evaluation. It indicates that 340 IIP participants (191 graduates and 149 exits) are predominantly young adults with low educational attainment. Specifically:

- 64% of participants interviewed (n=216) are 29 years old or younger;
- 87% of participants (n=290) have a grade 11 education or lower, while more than 50% of the participants (n=164) have a grade 8 education or less; and
- half of the participants are caring for children under five years of age.

With respect to the male-female split, the IIP-Year 2 projects reached relatively more women than men. An analysis of participant lists indicates that 55% of

participants were female and 45% male.[15] In comparison, the gender split of the survey was 38% males and 62% females. This difference may be due to the fact that more men than women were out of their communities and on the land when the surveys were undertaken in July and August.

The survey findings suggest that IIP participants, on average, may have had higher education levels than the overall population of social assistance recipients in the NWT. An estimated 50% of those who participated in this evaluation reported that they had a Grade 8 education or less as compared to the approximately 65% of social assistance recipients in the NWT.[16]

Table 4.1.1 shows as well that 5% of participants (n=18) have a grade 12 education or equivalent. This appears high relative to the general NWT educational attainment, especially recognizing that most projects were located in small aboriginal communities. One reason for the reported result may be that respondents exaggerated their educational attainment. Another reason may relate to the differences in interpretation with respect to the target group, as discussed above, and may reflect a tendency to select the most job-ready candidates from among all eligible persons.

A comparison of the profiles of graduates and exits indicates no statistically significant differences between the two groups in respect of their gender, age, marital status, education, and presence of preschool children in their families.

Conclusion

The findings provided above, including the observation that there are no significant differences between graduates and exits, support the conclusion that the referral and selection processes used by IIP projects worked reasonably well. The resulting group of project participants is reflective of the target group of the program.

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15 The gender split for Year 2 projects is different than for Year 1 projects, which had a 45 % female and 55% male split. With respect to educational attainment and number of participants with young children, the Year 1 and 2 participants were relatively similar.

16 Department of Education, Culture, and Employment, *Income Security Reform*, March 1994.

Table 4.1.1
Profile of Program Participants Derived from Survey Results

	Graduates		Exits	
	#	%	#	%
Gender:				
male	75	39%	55	37%
female	116	61%	94	63%
	191	100%	149	100%
Age:				
24 or less	60	32%	43	29%
25 - 29	59	31%	54	36%
30 - 34	29	15%	25	17%
35 - 39	20	11%	18	12%
40+	21	11%	9	6%
	189	100%	149	100%
Marital Status:				
single	99	52%	77	52%
married/common law	82	43%	63	42%
separated /divorced/widowed	10	5%	9	6%
	191	100%	149	100%
Education:				
grade 8 or less	86	46%	78	54%
grade 9, 10 or 11	73	39%	53	37%
grade 12 or GED	10	5%	8	6%
college/technical training	16	9%	5	3%
university	1	1%	1	1%
	186	100%	145	100%
Caring for children under five:	94	50%	75	50%
Caring for elderly person:	16	8%	24	16%

Notes: Not all respondents answered all questions, resulting in a slight variation in the number of respondents by demographic dimension. All percentages are rounded to the nearest integer. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. The Technical Appendix provides participant profiles broken down by WAP and NSDP and East and West.

4.1.4 Project Coverage

Background

The extent to which IIP reaches its target group has as well geographic and size dimensions. The relevance of the IIP initiative is linked to the number of participants relative to the target population. In addition, in an area as vast as the NWT, the location of projects may give an indication of whether or not the initiative reaches into all regions.

Findings

As discussed above, the exact number of IIP participants is not known because the initiative has no system in place to track accurately who entered the programs, who graduated, and who left (and when).

The number of persons involved with the IIP initiative during its second year is estimated to be in the range of 900 to 950. This equates to roughly 1.5% of the total population of the NWT and some 8% of the total beneficiaries of the social assistance system.[17]

The IIP initiative has a broad geographic coverage, as shown in Table 4.1.2. The breakdown of IIP projects corresponds roughly with the relative population numbers in the different regions, except that the North Slave Region has relatively fewer projects and the Keewatin relatively more projects than population numbers would indicate.

Table 4.1.2
Number of IIP Projects by Region

Region	WAPs	NSDP	Total
Keewatin	7	4	11
Kitikmeot	2	3	5
Baffin	4	7	11
North Slave	10	5	15
South Slave	3	4	7
Inuvik	4	6	10
Total	30	29	59

With respect to community coverage, Year 2 of the IIP initiative reached two-thirds of all NWT communities with populations in excess of 100 (35 out of 53).

Two additional findings with respect to the initiative's coverage are:

- only about a quarter of key informants indicate satisfaction with the number of participants in relation to the number of persons on social assistance; and
- a few projects were unable to fill their classes with eligible persons and took in others, who were not paid an attendance allowance and who were not on social assistance.

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[17] The social assistance caseload in April 1996 was 4,751; social assistance provides benefits to 11,412 persons. Source: Don Plunkett, ECE, Personal Communication.

The former finding suggests that people in the communities recognize a high need for IIP or similar projects. This observation needs to be interpreted in light of the finding, presented above, that some 8% of total social assistance beneficiaries were involved with IIP projects in some way. The latter finding indicates the importance of flexibility on the local level.

Conclusion

The IIP initiative involves a considerable proportion of the persons who meet the broad eligibility criteria. It furthermore reaches all parts of the NWT and provides projects in two-thirds of all communities with populations in excess of 100. In the opinion of the study team, the coverage of the IIP initiative is extensive.

4.1.5 Exits

Background

Exit rates are an indication of the "fit" between the project and the needs and aspirations of the participants. Reasons for leaving the projects provide information that is relevant for the day-to-day management of projects.

Findings

The exact number of persons who entered an IIP project and did not continue to the end is not known. IIP has no system that tracks accurately who participated and who left, an issue that will be discussed further below. Forty-four percent (n=149) of our surveys are exit surveys, suggesting that 44% of participants dropped out. However, this number is influenced by decisions of the study team and community researchers about who to interview.

Lists of project participants gathered by the study team suggest an exit rate of 50%. This statistic is derived from start and end date information that was provided on approximately half of the participants. Field work revealed the existence of other, longer lists in the communities, suggesting that the names of at least some exits were lost along the way.

This exit information can be contrasted with recent experience of other programs. Nunavut Arctic College experiences ABE exit rates around 35%, recognizing that some persons leave the program to transfer to other programs

or for employment.[18] The Northern Addiction Worker Training program shows an exit rate of around 30%.[19] Exit rates experienced by IIP in Year 1 were similar to those of Year 2.

Conclusion

Although the program data do not allow for an accurate assessment of exit rates, the available evidence suggests that the exit rate was approximately 40%-50%. This appears high relative to other programs, such as ABE or Northern Addiction Worker Training.

The uncertainty associated with the exit rate suggests the need for stronger systems to track participants and management instruments that will make it possible for project managers in the communities and the Colleges to mitigate those circumstances that make people leave the projects. A consistently and timely administered and analyzed exit survey — such as included in the IIP Program Handbook in July 1996 — may provide the necessary information.

Leaving an IIP project is not necessarily a failure. IIP's objective is to help persons along the way to reduced dependency on social assistance. In this context, an exit can be considered a success if that person, on balance, had a positive experience. Information on the impacts of the projects on exits, presented in Section 4.3, suggests that many exits indeed benefited from their involvement in the projects. A further analysis of the reasons why people leave the program indicates that employment features among them.

In addition, all education and training institutions experience a certain level of exits as students assess their involvement, change classes, schools or study direction, or decide to pursue other activities. No program or initiative could appeal to all persons for which it is intended.

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[18] Derived from student records. Source: Mr. Ian Rose, Director, Program Development , personal communication.

[19] Ms. Vera Morin, Coordinator of Northern Addiction Worker Training program, persona l communication.

4.1.6 Reasons for Leaving

Background

The reasons that participants give for leaving provide insight into the weakest aspects of the projects.

Findings

Table 4.1.3 presents the reasons exits give most frequently for leaving the projects. As with all survey-related information, this table relies on self-assessment of the respondents and cannot be checked against other information. The total in the table does not add to 100% because multiple answers were permitted.

Table 4.1.3
Reasons for Leaving the Program

Child care difficulties	22%
Personal issues	18%
Instructor was not very helpful	15%
The program was not what I expected	14%
Did not like some parts of the program	14%
Got a job	13%
Did not get along with instructor	13%

Note: Total number of exits equals 149.

The survey probes as well which parts of the program respondents did not like. Fourteen percent of exits indicate that the project was not challenging enough, while 5% mention each of the following: not enough instruction, instructor too personal, gossip, language of instruction, and other.[20]

The information presented in the table clearly indicates that child care difficulties feature prominently among reasons to leave the program. As mentioned before in Section 3.3, IIP projects do not provide child care spaces. IIP participants are,

[20] The findings that 14% of exits found the prog ram not what they expected and that 14% did not like some parts of the program are not additive because multiple responses were allowed . In total, 21% of exits (n=32) indicate that they did not like parts of the program (n=11), or that the program was not what they expected (n=11), or both (n=10).

however, eligible for child care allowances provided by a different division of ECE. Interviews conducted in the context of the three case studies indicate that the problem with child care allowances relates to their late arrival. If allowances arrive late, the affected participants may not be able to keep up with payments for child care, leading to child care providers quitting. These interviews indicate as well that the number of good child care providers is often insufficient.

The other major reason for dropping out of IIP projects relates to the instructor. Twenty-one percent of respondents to the exit survey indicate that instructor-related issues play a role.[21] This finding underlines the importance of the instructors in IIP projects. The study team observes that the implementation of IIP is influenced by system-wide deficiencies with respect to instructors: there is no full-time ABE training program (although there is a part-time program), there is no full-time life skills teacher training program; and there is a lack of aboriginal instructors, especially in the west.

The experience of the study team suggests that contract instructors often have little or no preparation time or orientation to the project prior to starting work. The evaluation activities uncovered isolated instances of instructors arriving from outside the community on Friday to start teaching on Monday and of instructors displaying considerable insensitivity towards the culture in which they found themselves.

IIP recognizes the importance of appropriate orientation and supported Aurora College's request for the professional development workshops in Fort Smith and Yellowknife to support NSDP instructors already in place. The Program Handbook includes instructor orientation among the sponsors' responsibilities.

Finally, one of the top six reasons for leaving the project is very positive for the IIP initiative: 13% of exits left the initiative for employment. This finding is further corroborated by the fact that almost 60% of exits indicate that they have worked at a job since their involvement with IIP.

Conclusion

The major reasons that respondents mention for leaving the projects — child care, personal problems, and instructors — are "old" problems. The experience

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[21] The percentages presented in Table 4.2.2 are not additive, because multiple responses were allowed. In total 21% of respondents (n=32) state that instructor-related problems are part of the reason for leaving the project, accounting for those respondents (n=10) who indicate that their instructor was not helpful **and** that they did not get along with their instructor.

of the Colleges and other programs has underlined the importance of these factors time and time again.

Because it is known that these factors would be crucial, they could have been alleviated within the confines of the IIP initiative. Orientation of the instructors to the projects and timely arrival at the project site should have been the norm for all projects. Child care allowance could be paid out by the projects, with subsequent reimbursement by ECE.

4.1.7 Project Alignment with Community Needs

Background

Project relevance can be looked at from two perspectives. A program-centred view looks at the alignment of the IIP projects with the IIP guidelines and the alignment of the IIP initiative with the objectives of the Strategic Initiatives. This perspective was examined in Section 4.1.1. It can also be viewed from the perspective of the communities, raising questions about the alignment of the projects with community needs and aspirations.

Findings

More than four-fifths of the 132 key informants agree with the statement that the projects fit well with the social needs of their communities. Slightly less than three-quarters see the projects as well aligned with the communities' economic needs.

The finding that the projects generally fit the community needs is tempered by the fact that only about a third of key informants feel that the communities were sufficiently involved with the project planning. This finding should be placed in the context of the IIP approach to community involvement, which includes advertising for project sponsors and personal contacts of regional ECE officials with groups and organizations who might be interested in IIP.

Conclusion

The projects are well aligned with the community needs. This alignment is achieved despite relatively limited community involvement with the projects. This observation suggests that additional community involvement could further

enhance the relevance of the projects from the perspective of the communities. The planning timelines of future initiatives should be amended to allow this more intense interaction.

4.1.8 IIP as a Stepping Stone

Background

The time certain nature of IIP underlines the importance of its linkages to other programs or agencies that may be able to work with IIP participants as they make their journey towards lessened reliance on social assistance.

Findings

Most IIP participants had realistic expectations when they entered the program. Seventy-two percent (n=138) of graduates indicate that they were motivated by a desire to improve their education and 51% (n=98) wanted to increase their job skills. Only 22% of graduates indicate that they thought that they would get a job after the program and 20% state that their desire for a job played a part in their participation with the projects.

IIP is a two-year pilot initiative. It focuses on delivering programming within its time frame and contains no provisions for ongoing support or monitoring of participants.

Some individual WAPs have a longer time horizon. One project gathered data on and trained people for an evolving renewable resource industry. Another project provides articulation with ongoing trade programming. Most of the WAPs, however, do not provide a formal linkage to further work experience or training programs.

In general terms, the low level of economic development in many smaller communities and the retrenchment of the GNWT, the largest employer in the Territories, severely limits the number of training or work placement positions outside the IIP initiative, making the linkage to ongoing work activity-based training tenuous. There are some exceptions, especially for communities in close proximity to existing or planned mine developments or in the context of establishing an infrastructure for Nunavut, where ongoing on-the-job training may be a possibility.

The NSDPs link to the future lies mainly in career counselling and career action plans. The graduate survey indicates that 25% of NSDP graduates (n=24) did not get or could not remember getting career counselling, a required part of each project. Seventeen percent (n=17) indicate that they did not receive a career action plan. Those who received the counselling or the career plan express a high level of satisfaction with them. Three quarters (53 out of 71 respondents) express satisfaction with the career counselling and 80% (65 out of 81) with the career action plan.

A further link to future training opportunities relates to the increase in educational attainment of NSDP participants. NSDP graduates will receive preference over other students when enrolling in further ABE programming.

Conclusion

IIP is a two-year initiative and this time frame limits its ability to forge solid linkages with other programs for its graduates. There exists a linkage between NSDPs and ongoing College programming via the normal testing procedures the Colleges use for assessing student attainment levels. IIP increases this linkage by obtaining a preferred entry of its graduates into ABE programming of the Colleges. With respect to the WAPs, the linkage to ongoing work placements or training opportunities is virtually non-existent.

4.1.9 Service Gaps

Background

The IIP initiative is especially relevant if it fills a gap in government service provision to the communities. The relevance of the project is diminished insofar as its services overlap with those of other programs.

Findings

In recent years, the funding of training of SARs in the NWT has undergone significant change. In the late 80s and early 90s, CEIC, now HRDC, cost-shared SARs' programming under the Canada Assistance Plan, using funding from Health and Welfare Canada. It was involved as well with an annually negotiated government to government training plan. This latter program targeted a broader group than just SARs. Since then, part of those funds have been diverted into the Pathways strategy, which is now controlled through regional bilateral

agreements. The balance of the money is now expended through an annual ECE training plan.

IIP is the follow-on program to the SARs program in the late 80s, administered on the federal side by HRDC. The annual ECE training plan, which targets more than just SARs, and IIP form the bulk of programming for SARs.

There are some instances in which IIP-funded projects overlap with other programs or training activities. For example, two projects provided training to construction and retail workers who would have received training in the absence of the IIP initiative, although possibly less comprehensively. In another instance IIP participants mixed with the general student population of Aurora campus and took the regular College Office Procedures (COP) program side-by-side with non-IIP participants. This clearly indicates an overlap between an IIP project and regular college programming, with the proviso that the College may not have been able to offer COP at that particular time without the enrollment of IIP participants.

In general, there is overlap between programming available to communities. Section 5, Beyond IIP, enumerates 14 different human resources programs and there are overlaps between IIP and some of them. For example, one project came to IIP after applying for Pathways and Building and Learning funding. One NSDP classroom was side by side with a regular ABE program, using essentially the same curriculum and targeting essentially the same persons. As discussed in Section 5, Beyond IIP, potential overlaps, such as between ABE and NSDPs, play a role in allocating different programs and projects to different communities and can result in a community getting a NSDP because it has no regular ABE programming. This may limit the actual overlap of the two programs notwithstanding the fact that they are in many ways similar programs.

Conclusion

The IIP initiative in part fills the gap that was left by the termination of the Government to Government Training Plan and the SARs program under the Canada Assistance Plan. It follows in the footsteps of the SARs program and shifts the emphasis of the training that was provided under Government to Government Training Plan by including work placements.

IIP projects show some overlap with existing programs. The overlap is most clear between the Colleges' NSDPs and their regular ABE programming as evidenced by the fact that NSDPs use regular ABE curriculum. In addition, the educational attainment of many IIP participants, described in Section 4.1.3, is sufficiently high to make them eligible for regular ABE programming. Indeed, the

Colleges use IIP as a vehicle to provide upgrading in selected communities and in doing so expanded the ABE offering over what would have been available without the initiative.

The reality of often non-continuous ABE programming in many communities means that NSDPs provide ABE-based programming in communities that would not have had any upgrading courses otherwise.

4.2 Project Design and Implementation

Having discussed issues related to the relevance of the project, we now turn to related issues of project design and implementation. This section addresses questions with respect to the appropriateness of the IIP initiative's activities to facilitate achievement of its objectives.

4.2.1 Project Needs Assessments and Planning

Background

The first step towards the creation of an IIP project is to do an assessment of the needs of the community and to plan the activities that would be undertaken to meet those needs. If these activities are not done well, the success of the projects is at risk from the outset.

Findings

NSDPs are planned by the two Colleges, using their internal mechanisms. Although the Colleges have varying degrees of community involvement built into their way of conducting business, it is the study team's assessment that the NSDPs are essentially planned centrally by staff of the Colleges. They cooperate with officials of ECE, with little or no involvement from H&SS and HRDC. This finding is supported by a review of the Program Planning and Delivery Process for NSDPs described in the Program Handbook, which places the responsibility for the preparation of College proposals with the College headquarters and the headquarters of ECE.

WAPs involve community-based organizations, insofar as prospective project sponsors were invited to prepare proposals for funding under the IIP initiative. Project sponsors are involved as well in the implementation of the projects, in

cooperation with CSSWs, CDOs, Income Support Workers, and others. It follows that the community involvement in planning and executing WAP projects is greater as compared to NSDPs. Two of 30 WAP project sponsors were not community-based organizations: one was an Edmonton-based construction contractor building a dam for an aboriginal Development Corporation and the NWT Development Corporation and another was a Territory-wide retail organization.

Overall only about a third of key informants agree with the statement that local people and organizations were sufficiently involved in the planning of IIP projects. This finding is not surprising given the fact that the Program Handbook does not include communities or community-based organizations in the planning, approval, or delivery of NSDPs. WAPs show more community involvement, but even there the involvement is limited to the project sponsor and does not include the community as a whole.

The planning process notwithstanding, the IIP projects generally fit well with the social needs of the communities and to a lesser extent with their economic development needs. These issues are discussed in Section 4.1.7.

Project needs assessments are undertaken as part of the WAP proposals submitted by the project sponsors. The Colleges, in cooperation with officials of ECE, do a more or less explicit needs assessment as part of the decision of where to offer NSDPs.

The evaluation activities provide only limited indications of the extent to which the Colleges, ECE, or project sponsors use available information on community needs. Labour market statistics for Deh Cho communities have been developed, with other regions forthcoming, and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism and the NWT Statistics Bureau distribute labour market information in various forms. In addition, there are many more general studies that describe the NWT labour market, social conditions, and economic development opportunities and barriers, including Department of Education, *Preparing People for Employment in the 1990s*, the strategic plans of the Aurora College and Nunavut Arctic College, and IIP Year 1 evaluation.

Conclusion

The division of roles and responsibilities with respect to needs assessment and planning — as well as for subsequent approval, implementation, and evaluation phases — is well defined for the IIP initiative. The projects generally followed the outlined procedures.

The needs assessment and planning parts of the IIP initiative have the result that NSDPs are essentially given to the communities rather than generated by them. WAPs involve project sponsors, most of which were community-based organizations. The study team notes, however, that although the IIP initiative reaches out to the communities in the case of the WAPs, it reaches out to individual organizations and not to the community at large. Only a third of key respondents are satisfied with the level of community involvement and the case studies show a strong desire for involving the communities in their totality in the planning of projects, be it through Band, municipal, or other organizations.

4.2.2 Appropriateness of Project Components

Background

All IIP projects consist of an intake procedure and a combination of classroom training, work placement, career and personal counselling, and life skills training. The relative importance of the various components differs by project.

Findings

The selection process for most IIP projects involved a variety of persons, including the CSSW, CDO, the instructor/project coordinator, if in place, and a representative of the project sponsor. Other persons may have been involved as well.

Key informant interviews indicate that the referral and selection process was generally successful. About three-fifths of key informants indicate satisfaction with the involvement of CDOs and CSSWs in the selection process and the amount of communication among all persons involved in the selection process. However, the three case studies in Rae Edzo, Inuvik, and Iqaluit provide instances of classes that were disrupted by participants with severe drug and alcohol problems, people participating in work placements that did not interest them, and classes with participants with a very wide range of academic abilities.

Although there are no data to substantiate it in the context of this evaluation, the experience of the study team suggests that the selection process may have been hampered by the fragmented nature in which client assessments take place in the communities. Any person who is a client of government services may be assessed by the CSSW, the CDO and the ABE instructor. These various assessments, conducted from different perspectives, may not be shared easily within an inter-agency selection process due to confidentiality concerns.

It is unclear how much pre-testing of participants took place at project inception or if pre-tests were used to bring together relatively coherent groups of participants. Evidence from the case studies indicates that there were at least some NSDPs with participants with a wide range of skills and educational background.

With respect to project content, the IIP initiative exemplifies a further development of existing training delivery models. Its design forces integration of classroom training and work placements and recognizes the need to support

these with life skills training and personal and career counselling. These latter services have been available in most communities, but typically not within a single program.

The NSDPs and many of the WAPs make extensive use of existing ABE curriculum. The study team notes that the ABE curriculum has been developed and modified over the years to increase its northern relevance. The projects make extensive use as well of existing life skills curriculum and in some instances, NSDP participants were enrolled in other College-based programs, such as the Community Office Procedures program.

The study team is not aware of work placement guidelines, except a short description of roles and responsibilities of workplace hosts in the Program Handbook. Ideally, the work placements should have had some guidelines, including a requirement for work placement host and worker orientations, individualized work placement training goals and strategies, feedback mechanisms, and ongoing participant mentoring and support by the project instructors/ coordinators.

Although most participants express satisfaction with the work placements, there were isolated instances of IIP work placements that did not work well. The study team was told about a work placement where participants did not show up at all and of a placement where the host was not informed of when the participant was supposed to come or who in the project to talk to if questions arose.

Traditional knowledge/language instruction is an optional component, in part in response to findings of the IIP Year 1 evaluation. The survey results indicate that 44% of graduates (n=84) report that traditional knowledge/language instruction was not a part of their project. Most instruction was given in English and 84% of graduates (n=161) expressed satisfaction with the language in which instruction took place.

Impacts and satisfaction levels of participants with the various program segments have a bearing on their appropriateness. These are discussed in section 4.3.

Conclusion

Key informants generally consider the referral process to be appropriate. As discussed in Section 4.1.3, the profile of participants — an output measure for the referral process — is reflective of the target group.

Many IIP projects use existing ABE and life skills training materials. Considering the availability of this material and the efforts that have been expended to make this material more relevant to the north, their use in IIP projects is appropriate.

Support materials for the work placement component are not available and the projects were left to fend for themselves in this area. The importance of the work placements as part of the integrated delivery of services inside the IIP initiative suggests that development of such materials would have enhanced this part of the projects.

The evidence with respect to the inclusion of traditional knowledge and language is mixed. Graduates are by and large satisfied with the language of instruction, which is English. However, two-fifths of key respondents indicate a dissatisfaction with the involvement of elders in the projects, suggesting that there should be more emphasis on traditional pursuits. IIP leaves the inclusion or exclusion of traditional knowledge and aboriginal language up to the individual projects.

4.2.3 Satisfaction by Project Component

Background

This evaluation sought input from graduates about their level of satisfaction with various parts of the project in which they were involved. These satisfaction levels give insights into the appropriateness of the programming.

Findings

Table 4.2.1 presents the percentage of the IIP graduates who received the listed project components and expressed their satisfaction with the respective components. The table, which reflects only the satisfaction scores of those graduates who indicate that the particular component is part of their project, shows very high levels of satisfaction with the work placement, education and skills training, and the language of instruction.

Not all graduates indicate that they received all components. However, only 10% of graduates indicate that they did not receive one of the components presented in Table 4.2.1.

Table 4.2.1
Satisfaction of Graduates by Project Component
Highest Scores

	% of Respondents
The type of work	90%
Job skills training	89%
Amount of time spent in classroom	89%
Life skills training	87%
Language of instruction	86%

Note: Total number of graduates equals 192.

It is instructive as well to see which components received the lowest level of satisfaction. These are listed in Table 4.2.2, which shows that respondents are less satisfied with the financial and support aspects of their involvement with IIP. It should be noted that the table indicates child care in general. No project provides a child care program; rather participants are eligible to receive child care allowances.

These findings generally reflect the information gleaned from 132 key informant interviews. Approximately 90% of key informants feel that the participants gained knowledge and skills and less than half of key informants agree with the statement that the projects helped participants with personal and family needs. Approximately one-third of key informants express as well concern about how the projects provided for the financial needs of the participants and about half question the adequacy of the $10 attendance allowance.

Table 4.2.2
Satisfaction of Graduates by Project Component
Lowest Scores

	% of Respondents
$10 per day attendance allowance	60%
Information before the program began	64%
Availability of day care	65%
Allowances for child care, transportation, etc.	69%
Equipment	70%

Note: Total number of graduates equals 192.

WAP participants are more satisfied than NSDP participants with the following aspects of the projects:

- the information before the program began;
- facilities;
- the skills of the instructor; and
- recreational activities.

These differences are statistically significant.

There are some statistically significant differences as well between the satisfaction of participants in eastern as compared to western Arctic IIP projects. Eastern Arctic participants are more satisfied with:

- facilities;
- equipment;
- the language of instruction used;
- the life skills training received;
- the recreational activities during the projects; and
- the traditional knowledge/language component.

Conclusion

Project components generally receive a high satisfaction rating from graduates. The findings suggest that the projects were most successful, as measured by participant satisfaction, in those components that are skills oriented.

IIP was less well equipped to deal with the personal aspects of development. Forty-five percent of the 192 surveyed graduates indicate that personal counselling was not part of their project. This finding holds true for both NSDPs and WAPs. The lowest level of satisfaction relates to the financial aspects of the projects.

The satisfaction-based assessment of IIP projects tends to confirm the initiatives relative greater success in conveying skills than in dealing with personal issues. The study team is intrigued by the differences that show up between graduates in the eastern and western Arctic. Part of the explanation may lie with the higher incidence of permanent aboriginal ABE instructors in the east as compared to the west.

The findings show a higher level of satisfaction with WAPs than NSDPs. This could stem from either their greater emphasis on work placements or their inherent higher level of community involvement. On balance, the evidence suggests that the higher level of community involvement is the most significant contributor to these differences, because:

- both WAPs and NSDPs include work placements and there is no statistical difference between the satisfaction of WAP and NSDP graduates with respect to work placements; and
- key informants, who tend to speak more knowledgeably about the more community-based WAPs than the Colleges-based NSDPs, express a relatively low level of satisfaction with the communities' involvement in WAPs and NSDPs.

4.2.4 Alignment of Projects with Project Proposals

Background

The planning phase leads to project proposals that are evaluated on their merit in the context of IIP guidelines. Beyond the approval, the actual implementation of the projects must be in line with the submitted proposals.

Findings

Although the evaluation includes three case studies, it is not an evaluation of individual projects and the findings pertaining to the alignment of projects with project proposals are not based on a project-by-project assessment. That said, the evaluation activities, especially the case studies and the 132 key informant interviews, do not flag any real concerns in this area.

With the exception of one or two projects, the projects that were looked at in some detail were well aligned with their proposals. The exceptions were modifications to NSDPs in progress, based on the College's perception of the needs of participants. These modifications were, in the view of the study team, appropriate changes in view of local circumstances.

Conclusion

IIP projects were essentially delivered within the confines of their respective proposals.

4.2.5 Project Monitoring and Control Systems

Background

Project management requires monitoring and control systems for reasons of accountability and to aid the management of individual projects.

Findings

The IIP initiative is delivered in a relatively decentralized manner and reporting arrangements are as follows:

- NSDPs report to coordinators in the Colleges and consolidated reports are submitted to IIP staff in Yellowknife; and
- WAPs report directly to the Regional Superintendents of ECE. Some, but not all, regional offices share project reports with IIP staff in Yellowknife.

Reporting of financial data is supported as well by the central GNWT financial systems which record actual expenditures by the regional ECE offices and payments made to the Colleges. Cash flows of the projects are projected and monitored by IIP personnel in Yellowknife.

No detailed analysis or audit of the financial records of the IIP initiative was undertaken as part of this evaluation. Casual observation, however, suggests that the financial administration is acceptable. The organizational structure of IIP, which includes that the GNWT pays the contribution agreements and then invoices HRDC in Yellowknife for the federal portion, provides a strong incentive on the part of ECE to conduct the financial administration in a timely and accurate manner.

With respect to the more management-oriented reporting, the study team observes that there is considerable variability in the form, detail, and accuracy in which project information is provided. Much of the reporting is on the level of listing the activities undertaken in a time period. In addition, the decentralized implementation of IIP means that there is no central point where all management information is gathered and analyzed. Nor is there evidence of management information funnelled back to the projects.

In general, IIP staff experiences frustration with respect to getting community-based sponsors to submit information as outlined in the contribution agreements.

The exception is financial information. All contribution agreements are collected by IIP headquarters and expenditures are monitored there.

The IIP initiative lacks an adequate management information system that could be used for the day-to-day management of projects, the overall initiative, and evaluative activities. For example, the study team encountered considerable delay in receiving lists of participants to be used as the basis of its survey activities. The lists, when received, were in a wide variety of formats, and often lacking in very basic information. In almost 50% of cases, it was unclear from the lists if participants were graduates of or exits from their project. This suggests that individual projects could not get information about how their exit rates compared to other IIP projects in the region or NWT-wide.

In the end, the study team received lists with a total of 884 participant names. The key reason behind the difference between 688 funded positions and the 884 participant names submitted to the evaluation team lies with the continuous intake of new participants by many IIP projects, especially NSDPs. Continuous intake is in line with the experience of ABE programming in the north and across Canada, and the IIP Program Handbook indicates that projects should have regular intake dates to maintain their maximum client level of participation.

The expected and common nature of the continuous participant intake raises the question, however, why a better system of tracking participants was not put in place. In addition, it raises questions about who is a "graduate" of projects. Clearly, when intake is continuous, the training and other program services received by a graduate who started on the first day of the project will be different from that received by somebody who entered halfway through the project.

Turning, finally, to evaluation-related information, the projects were asked to deliver a Canada-wide baseline survey that was very extensive and detailed. The baseline survey was poorly received by many participants, reducing their willingness to contribute to further evaluation activities. In addition, the terms of reference for the Year 2 evaluation — a joint federal and territorial activity — were very detailed. The very lengthy questionnaire needed to answer all the detailed questions would have resulted in a poor response rate. Discussion between the study team and the IIP Evaluation Committee reduced the size of the questionnaire by focusing on the key aspects of the program. The relatively small questionnaire notwithstanding, it took considerable effort, including drawing heavily on personal goodwill of study team members with people in the communities to obtain the response rate indicated in Section 2.

Conclusion

The IIP initiative appears to have had appropriate financial information systems in place. However, its project-level management information systems were inadequate, as evidenced, for example, by the inability of the system to generate participant lists in a timely and accurate manner.

With respect to the IIP Year 2 evaluation, the experience of administering the baseline survey instrument and the more tightly focused Year 2 evaluation questionnaire clearly indicates the limitations of surveying in the north. The very small population base relative to the number of government programs, many of which undertake surveys in the event of needs assessments, evaluations and other progress-related activities, reduces the possibilities for very in-depth surveys.

4.2.6 Jurisdictional Issues

Background

There are a number of agencies involved in IIP, including the ECE, H&SS, and HRDC. This has the potential to raise jurisdictional issues.

Findings

The IIP initiative was delivered by ECE, with limited involvement of H&SS, especially after the program design phase. The involvement of HRDC has been limited as well, and there do not appear to have been any jurisdictional disputes that had an impact on the projects.

Conclusion

The implementation of IIP is not impaired by jurisdictional problems between the GNWT and the federal government.

4.2.7 Attendance Allowance

Background

The IIP initiative provides a $10 per day attendance allowance to participants. This attendance allowance is paid by the project sponsor in addition to the social assistance participants receive from ECE. Attendance allowances are controversial in that they add to the project costs, while it is unknown to what extent they are a motivation to participation.

Findings

Survey respondents indicate that attendance allowances are not a significant motivation for entering the program or staying with it. Of the 192 graduates and 149 exits surveyed, only 13% of project graduates (n=25) indicate that the attendance allowance was part of their reasons for entering the projects, while only 13% of exits (n=19) cite the attendance allowance as a reason for their decision to leave the project. These findings are further corroborated by the survey result that 68% of graduates (n=130) indicate that they would have entered the program if it did not offer the attendance allowance.

These findings suggest that reducing or eliminating the attendance allowance may well be an effective strategy to reduce the program costs, although the numbers indicate as well that such a move would have an impact on who would choose to participate.

The question of attendance allowances needs to be seen relative to the financial needs of participants. In this context, the $10 per day attendance allowance (approximately $200 per month) is a significant amount of money for potential participants, many of whom live within very modest means.

Attendance allowances can also be seen as a celebration of the involvement of people in IIP projects. A large percentage of IIP participants start from low levels of educational attainment, life skills, and often self esteem. This makes it important that their participation is encouraged and supported in many ways which are meaningful to them. Celebrating their involvement by means of an attendance allowance can be seen as part of this encouragement.

The design feature of having the projects pay attendance allowances should be considered in the context of social allowance payments. The study team was told by several respondents that there was a marked difference between the generally positive and respectful atmosphere of their project and the "take-a-

number" approach to the payment of their social allowance. These respondents see their IIP project as a haven from the disrespectful world in which they find themselves. The IIP handbook suggests that social allowance cheques are distributed at project sites, but this does not always occur. This anecdotal evidence suggests that IIP projects could be further enhanced by insisting that the social allowance payment be part of the program, thus creating a training and personal development experience for the participants that is considerably more positive than the alternative, i.e., drawing social assistance. Paying social assistance within the framework of the projects would reinforce the positive celebratory aspects of the attendance allowance.

Conclusion

Although the survey results indicate that the attendance allowances are not a central feature for participants, the study team nevertheless does not draw the conclusion that they should be reduced or removed from the project design. Attendance allowances are both a considerable financial boost for many persons on social assistance and a concrete indication of the value that the system places on participation.

4.3 Impact

The study team looks upon IIP's impacts as the most important aspect of the evaluation. Did the IIP projects affect the participants and their communities in a positive manner? Can it be demonstrated that IIP lessened the dependence on social assistance?

4.3.1 Impacts on Participants

Background

IIP projects deliver a range of services to participants including academic upgrading, life skills training, counselling, and work experience. Did these interventions help the recipients?

Findings

Information gathered from key informants shows that some 90% of the 132 respondents see the projects as good vehicles for delivering skills training and work experiences. Fewer respondents, slightly less than half, believe that the projects addressed adequately the personal and family needs of the participants.

These general observations are supported by the findings of the graduate and exit surveys, which address impacts from the perspective of the participants. Table 4.3.1 provides the percentage of graduates who agreed or strongly agreed with a number of statements that relate to project impacts. The table orders the lists on the five highest scoring impacts among graduates. The table presents as well the perceptions of exits about impacts.

Table 4.3.1
Participants' Perceptions of Project Impacts
Highest Impacts

Statements receiving highest level of agreement	Level of Agreement	
	Graduates	Exits
Encouraged me to get more education or take further training	88%	78%
Made me feel better about myself and my abilities	84%	72%
The program helped me to improve my education	80%	57%
Helped me become more independent/able to do things for myself	80%	73%
Improved my life skills	74%	64%

Note: Total number of respondents equals 341 (192 graduates and 149 exits).

The information in the table indicates that the projects helped people, both exits and graduates, to feel better about themselves and their abilities, to improve their education and to look for further training. Not unexpectedly, graduates consistently show a higher level of agreement with the impact statements posed to them as compared to the exits. The difference was statistically significant for a number of them.

It is important as well to identify the lowest scoring impacts, presented in Table 4.3.2. The table shows that, although the projects made an essentially positive impact on the dimensions shown, the lowest scores appear to cluster around personal and cultural impacts. In addition, the impact on job searching skills is rated relatively low.

Further insights into the project impacts can be gained from information on the most and least useful parts of the program as identified by respondents. Tables 4.3.3 and 4.3.4 indicate that graduates saw work experience and classroom training — both very skills oriented — as the most useful. They perceived the

personal counselling and life skills training — both more person-oriented — as the least useful parts.

Table 4.3.2
Participants' Perceptions of Project Impacts
Lowest Impacts

Statements receiving the lowest level of agreement	Level of Agreement	
	Graduates	Exits
Helped me better understand my culture	53%	57%
Helped me deal with personal and family issues	53%	44%
Made me more involved in my community	57%	51%
Helped me learn how to look for a job	62%	47%
Helped me learn to apply for a job	65%	45%

Note: Total number of respondents equals 341 (192 graduates and 149 exits).

Table 4.3.3
Graduates' Perceptions of Most Useful
Program Components

Component	% of Graduates
Work Experience	46%
Classroom Training	34%

Note: Total number of graduates equals 192.

Table 4.3.4
Graduates' Perceptions of Least Useful
Program Components

Component	% of Graduates
Personal Counselling	26%
Life Skills Training	15%

Note: Total number of graduates equals 192.

Project impact can be measured as well by the activity of the participants since their involvement with the projects. Table 4.3.5 shows that of the graduates, 52% (n=100) have applied for further training and 67% (n=129) for employment. The corresponding numbers for the exits are 42% (n=63) and 65% (n=97), respectively.

Table 4.3.5
Pursuit of Further Training or Employment

	Percentage of Participants	
	Graduates	Exits
Applied for further training	52%	42%
Applied for a job	67%	65%

Note: Total number of respondents equals 341 (192 graduates and 149 exits).

Finally, interviews conducted in the context of the three case studies indicate the need for long-term funding for projects such as those sponsored by IIP and this resonates with the experience of the study team. The need for a continuous training and career development path for people is an old theme, but one that has not lost any potency. Many IIP participants will not be able to find appropriate training opportunities in their communities now that the initiative is essentially completed.

Conclusion

The findings presented above indicate that participants were generally very positive about the impacts of IIP projects with respect to the key objective of the initiative: moving people towards reduced dependence. However, the findings, at least in their absolute numbers, should be interpreted with caution because the information presented relies on self-evaluation and is not based on standardized measurement.

Some 90% of key informants indicate satisfaction with project impacts related to skills training and work experience. Only about half of the key informants say that the project addressed adequately the personal and family needs of participants. The survey results support the observations of key informants, with the proviso that participants see high impacts in the area of personal development and relatively low impacts with respect to job search related skills. Taken together, these findings suggest that IIP was relatively more successful in improving skills than in dealing with more personal issues.

Participants who remained in their IIP projects experience greater benefits than exits, and a high percentage of both graduates and exits indicate continuing impacts as evidenced by seeking further training or employment. All these are clearly indicators of the success of IIP.

The relatively lower impact of IIP projects with respect to personal development as compared to skills acquisition relates in part to the very common practice to use instructors from outside the community or region who work under short term contracts to do most of the instruction. This practice does not facilitate the trust relationship needed before effective counselling can take place. In addition, participants may perceive a conflict between the roles of counsellor and instructor, reducing the likelihood of positive counselling impacts. Finally, it needs to be recognized that many ABE instructors are not trained life skills coaches or counsellors.

The fact that graduates see personal counselling as the least useful component may relate to the coordination with other agencies that this activity entails. In general, IIP is stronger where it relies on internal resources than where it provides referrals to other programs or support services.

On the positive side, the high satisfaction rating of work placements and classroom training may relate to the widespread notion that taking a training course is "a job". Work placements and the attendance allowance reinforce the "job" aspect of training, and thus strengthen the positive view of short term courses.

IIP is a 2-year pilot project and this time frame is too short to assess the likely long-term impact of the initiative on the social assistance dependency of participants. However, the time certain nature of IIP does not reduce the very real possibility that the lack of ongoing employment, education and training opportunities for many former IIP participants may negate over time many of the positive results of the initiative. This possibility was keenly felt by many respondents.

4.3.2 Impacts on Communities

Background

Communities feel the impact of IIP on a number of different levels. Most importantly, the communities feel an impact because community members gain in education and work experience. Community impacts relate as well to the general outlook of the community on the success of the projects, their contribution to local economic and social development, and the fostering of greater inter-agency collaboration within communities.

Findings

The 132 key informants are by and large positive about the IIP projects in their communities. Around 90% of key informants feel that the projects fit well with the needs of the communities and that the participants did gain knowledge and skills that they will use in their communities. In addition, about two thirds of key informants report satisfaction with the level of cooperation between all agencies and organizations involved in the projects. In general, it appears that IIP is a positive experience from the perspective of the communities.

With respect to the inter-agency cooperation, the study team heard mixed evidence. Most projects experience inter-agency cooperation at the outset because CSSWs, CDOs and project sponsors are all involved with the selection of participants. There is evidence of some IIP committees remaining active throughout the project, but there is evidence as well that many committees became dormant soon after the start of the projects.

IIP projects create more linkages between the work and training sectors than many other government services by explicitly including work placements. The study team did not hear of extensive difficulties in finding workplace hosts and about three-quarters of key informants were satisfied with the willingness of local employers to act as hosts and two-thirds with the benefits that the hosts received from participating.

That said, less than half of the key informants indicate satisfaction with the level of community and elder involvement in the projects. More community control was a very common theme among aboriginal key informants and many others as well. In addition, only about a quarter of key informants express satisfaction with the number of participants relative to the number of people on social assistance.

Another impact on communities relates to the equipment that some projects purchased, especially those projects that had a strong traditional skills component. In this context, IIP increases the resources, such as camping equipment, in some communities. Interviews in the context of the case study of Iqaluit-based projects indicate some uncertainty about the future of such equipment and suggest that it may deteriorate quickly if put in storage. In that case, it would not be seen as a community resource and maintained adequately. However, the relevant contribution agreements spell out that equipment stays with the sponsoring organization.

Conclusion

IIP is a successful program from the standpoint of the communities. It presents an integrated package of services and forces inter-agency cooperation, at least at the outset. All of these aspects are positive.

IIP stimulates some inter-agency cooperation and networks between training providers and workplace hosts. This is meaningful in itself and likely contributes to some positive shift in attitudes of employers towards social assistance recipients. It should be noted, however, that networks and inter-agency cooperation need meaningful work at hand to reward the time and effort it takes to maintain them. In this context it is unclear how long these benefits will remain without other programming that requires and inspires this level of cooperation.

The positive community impacts of IIP notwithstanding, only about a third of key informants express satisfaction with the level of community involvement with project planning and less than half say that they are satisfied with the level of community involvement generally. To their credit, IIP projects are generally in line with community needs and the WAPs did reach out to community-based organizations. However, they did not come forth from the communities at large.

4.4 Program Costs and Benefits

This final section of the evaluation findings looks at IIP from a financial and cost-benefit standpoint. It looks at the narrow question if the IIP projects have contributed to a reduction in spending on social assistance allowances.

4.4.1 Cost per Participant

Background

The IIP Year 1 evaluation presents estimates of the expenditure per participant of less than $5,000 on average, ranging from slightly over $6,000 per participant for WAPs and almost $4,300 for NSDPs.[22] Although that report cautions with respect to the interpretation of these results, it appears appropriate to generate the same statistics for the second year of the IIP initiative.

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[22] Terriplan Consultants and Martin Spiegelman Research Associates, *Paying Dividends: An Evaluation of the Investing in People Program - Year One* , November 1995, page 66.

Findings

In principle, the cost per participant is a very straightforward calculation dividing the total project costs — estimated at $4.8 million for the fiscal year 1995/96 and $1.2 million for the fiscal year 1996/97 — by the number of participants in the projects that were active in that period. There are, however, a number of complications, including:

- some projects are still active at the time of this evaluation;
- the exact number of participants is unknown and is estimated at between 900 and 950; and
- participants are not necessarily comparable because there is considerable variability with respect to the amount of exposure that different graduates have to the project due to the practice of continuous intake.

With these caveats in mind, the direct project expenditure per participant is estimated at between $5,800 and $6,100, with the cost per graduate roughly twice as high. These numbers are marginally higher if IIP management costs and some support activities, such as the ABE evaluation, are included. As presented in Table 4.4.1, the cost per participant for NSDPs is higher than for WAPs.

Table 4.4.1
Estimated IIP - Year 2 Expenditure per Participant

	Low Estimate	High Estimate
WAP	$5,150	$5,430
NSDP	$6,490	$6,850
All IIP Projects	$5,760	$6,080

Note: Direct project expenditure only.

The estimates of expenditure per participant for WAPs are in the same order of magnitude as the Year 1 estimate of less than $6,000, especially if IIP head office costs are taken into consideration[23]. The estimates of per participant expenditure for NSDPs in year 2 is considerably higher than for year 1. The

[23] The full costs of IIP would include as well the costs incurred by regional offices of ECE and by other departments involved in the planning and implementing of IIP projects. In addition, project sponsors incurred costs preparing proposals that may not have been included in contribution agreements. These various costs have not been quantified.

analysis suggests two reasons for this increase in per participant costs for NSDPs:

- the contract cost per funded training position increased from $7,600 in year 1 to $8,800 in year 2 or by 15%; and
- NSDPs took in relatively more new participants during the course of the projects in Year 1 as compared to Year 2. This causes the expenditure per participant in Year 1 to decrease relative to Year 2.

Conclusion

The findings presented above suggest that the expenditure per participant for WAPs is roughly similar in Year 2 as compared to Year 1. With respect to NSDPs, the expenditures are 50% higher. This increase is in part related to a higher per seat contract cost in Year 2 as compared to Year 1 and a relatively lower participant turnover. These findings should be interpreted with extreme caution due to the considerable uncertainty about the actual number of graduates and participants.

The estimated cost per participant as well as the estimate of reduction in social assistance payments, discussed below, must be understood within the context of IIP's impact on other programming costs. Survey findings suggest that many IIP graduates and exits hope to pursue other training options in the future, which means that participation in IIP may increase the system-wide costs, at least in the short to medium term. Insofar as IIP participants would not have pursued educational opportunities in the absence of the initiative, the success of the project (i.e. further training) makes it more expensive.

Anecdotal evidence from the key informant interviews suggests as well that participation in IIP may stimulate demands on other community resources, especially in the area of counselling. If this indeed occurs, it would be another example in which project success would lead to system-wide larger expenses.

4.4.2 Reduction in Social Assistance Draw

Background

Sections 4.1 through 4.3 of this report provide considerable detail about many of the benefits that the IIP initiative conveys upon participants and their communities. IIP may convey benefits as well on the level of policy making, insofar as the

lessons of IIP can inform the future programming. No attempt has been made to quantify these benefits in monetary terms.

This section investigates the benefits of IIP in terms of the impact on the amount of social assistance allowances that IIP participants receive. The benefits, thus defined, are then compared with the costs of running the projects. A simple example may clarify the procedure. If an IIP participant, who drew social assistance before and during his or her involvement with IIP, finds a job upon completion of a project — and it is recognized that IIP does not set itself this goal — then the initiative could claim that the reduction in social allowance is a benefit of IIP. Assuming that he or she drew on average $500 per month in social assistance prior to participation in an IIP project, it follows that, all else being equal, the intervention with an average cost of $6,000 would pay for itself in a year.

Findings

The study team requested information on the amounts of social assistance drawn by 884 participants of Year 2 projects. The social assistance information system was able to match 155 of these names (or 17.5%) with names in its database and provided the social assistance payments to these persons from April 4, 1994 though March 31, 1996. This relatively low level of matches is in part due to:

- a lack of shared identifier between IIP and social assistance systems;
- uncertainty with the spelling of many names; and
- the fact that IIP participants may have been eligible for social assistance and were benefiting from it, without being on the caseload.

The analysis of social assistance payment reduction was conducted on these 155 cases. The IIP benefit was determined by subtracting the average social allowance payment after the persons' involvement in an IIP project from their average draw immediately before the project. As shown in Table 4.4.2, this benefit is estimated at between $1.50 and $40 per month per participant.[24]

[24] The range of results relate to assumptions ma de by the study team with respect to which data to include in the analysis. As discussed before, the lists often do not indicate if a participant is a graduate or an exit and th e dates of their involvement with the project. The high estimate relates to a very small group (n=46) for which complete information was available.

To estimate the total benefit, these estimates have been applied to our high estimate of the total number of participants (950) and extended over five years. This latter estimate is arbitrary and for illustrative purposes only.

Table 4.4.2 shows the resulting range of benefit-cost ratios of between 0.02 and 0.42, indicating that IIP does not pay for itself in reductions in social allowance payments.[25]

Table 4.4.2
IIP Benefits and Costs

Benefits[1]	Average Reduction SSA per month	high	$40
		low	$1.50
	Total Reduction SSA[2]	high	$2,280,000
		low	$85,500
Costs[3]	Project Costs		$5,472,646
Benefit/Costs	High Estimate		0.42
	Low Estimate		0.42

Notes:
1. Range in results relate to the assumptions made by the study team with respect to which data to include in the analysis.
2. Assumes 950 participants and a 5-year time horizon.
3. Direct project costs only; excluding headquarters and ABE evaluation costs.

These results should be interpreted with extreme caution, mostly because of the assumption that the benefits would last five years, the small sample of participants on which information was available and the very short time that expired since the end of many projects. Given the limited training and job opportunities in many communities, it will take some time before participants who want employment or further training find appropriate opportunities.

Another way in which to look at the costs and benefits of IIP is to calculate average reduction of social assistance draw by IIP participants necessary to pay for the cost of the program over a selected time period. Table 4.4.3 presents the results of this calculation and shows that IIP would need to cause a 20% reduction in the social assistance payments to the, say, 950 IIP participants to pay for the $5.5 million cost of the project within 5.4 years.

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25 The benefit-cost ratios are marginally lower if the full cost of head office costs of the II P initiative, the staff costs associated with IIP incurred by ECE regional office and projec t proponents, and additional draw on other services, such as the child care allowances are included on the cost side.

Table 4.4.3
Repayment Period, Assuming Different Impacts

Reduction in Social Assistance Payments	Repayment Period (in years)
10%	10.7
15%	7.1
20%	5.4
25%	4.3
30%	3.6
35%	2.1

Conclusion

The findings of our analysis suggest that the impact of IIP on social assistance payments is insufficient to pay for the project within a reasonable time period. Even the most optimistic estimate of impacts — an estimate that is based on a small sample of cases — translates into a 12 year repayment period.

The study team notes that this very long repayment period cannot be interpreted as a failure of the program. IIP did not set out to move people into jobs; its aims were more modest and refer to moving people along towards reduced dependence on the social safety net.

5.0 BEYOND IIP

This section takes the conclusions from this evaluation and addresses what they mean in the context of future program delivery in the NWT. The evaluation team has drawn upon its background in adult education, social service delivery, and community development in the north as well as its familiarity with the evaluation of other employment enhancement programs to reflect upon the lessons that IIP holds for future initiatives directed at the development of individuals and communities in the north.

5.1 Lessons from IIP

In general terms, the findings from this evaluation point to the need for programs that support individual and community development in the north to have the following elements: 1) the integration of services, 2) closeness to the target group, 3) a multi-year time frame, and 4) the provision of a broad range of support services. Each of these will be discussed in turn below.

5.1.1 Integration of Services

IIP integrates a number of services, including ABE, work placements and career counselling. The findings from this evaluation suggest that there is a need to broaden further the number of services that are delivered in a single package to individuals in northern communities. For example, the difficulties with obtaining child care allowances in a timely manner suggest that IIP could be strengthened by integrating child care allowances more tightly. In this regard, the experience with the Suicide Prevention Training Program may prove helpful. That program provided participants with child care allowances to remove the timeliness of financial support for child care as a barrier to participation. The program itself then recovered the expenditures made for child care allowances from the appropriate child care support program.

The work done in the context of this evaluation suggests other reasons as well for tight integration of service delivery. These include the following:

- there are at least fourteen programs that provide human resources-related services and each program has its own objectives, guidelines, administrative requirements, timelines, etc.[26] This fragmented programming is believed to be both alienating and intimidating to communities and constrains community development. In general, it is difficult for people in communities to have a full understanding of all these programs and their interaction. It is especially difficult for individuals such as NSDP instructors who may only be in a community for the term of a project;

- the range of programs available to communities makes coordination among programs very important. IIP projects refer to and draw upon other programs, especially in the areas of substance abuse treatment and counselling. In some instances, IIP projects also have linkages with justice- and family violence-related programs. This integration requires considerable commitment of time and energy on the part of IIP staff and representatives of other services agencies. The experience with some IIP committees suggests that this commitment cannot be assumed to exist;

- considerable time of field workers is devoted to communicating with regional and head offices, satisfying the particular administrative demands of the different programs. These demands detract field workers from focusing singularly on responding to the specific service needs in their communities. Rotation of program and project delivery staff in communities and shifting of organization-specific goals and cultures provide additional barriers to the effective integration of services at the community level and efficient service delivery;

- the tendency for program funding in the NWT, including the funding of some IIP projects, to be allocated based on the relative richness or poverty of other programming that is available in various communities. Allocations are sometimes made at the regional, head office, or college level, reflecting a genuine effort to bring equity to the distribution of government services. In the case of IIP, this model may have resulted in some communities not having IIP projects and thus not benefiting from IIP's unique strengths, such as its integration of classroom training and work placements, because they were receiving other services.

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[26] The programs we identified include (in no implied order of importance) programs related to Community Justice, Building and Learning Strategy, Family Violence, Alcohol and Dru g Program, Literacy programs (College and ECE-based), Building Healthy Communities , Aborigin:l Headstart, Brighter Futures, Pathways, College-based ABE, ECE Training Plan , Community Wellness, and Investing in People.

Taken together these observations regarding IIP support the conclusion that future programming should strive for tight service delivery integration covering a broad range of services.

5.1.2 Closeness to Target Group

IIP's design recognizes that the multi-faceted needs of participants require cooperation between project coordinators, instructors, CSSWs, CDOs, and other support services. The evaluation finding that IIP projects were generally more successful in imparting skills than in dealing with the personal issues faced by participants suggests that future employment enhancement initiatives in northern communities place more emphasis on addressing personal issues that may be the key determinants of participants' eventual success. As discussed in the preceding section, this may be accomplished through the integration of appropriate services into programs and the forging of appropriate linkages with other agencies to meet the multi-faceted needs of participants.

This additional focus on personal issues may also occur if programming is community-based, as envisioned in the Community Empowerment initiative. Community-based programming would change the nature of government services from being generated outside communities to something generated within them. This could make programming more responsive to personal and community development needs by reducing the distance between service delivery agents and clients.

IIP takes several steps along the continuum that ranges from the delivery of single-focus GNWT programs to the delivery of integrated community-based programming. Insofar as participants were more satisfied with the more community-oriented WAPs as compared to the college-based NSDPs, this suggests that the satisfaction with programming improves as one moves along that continuum.

However, there is a distinction between a program such as IIP reaching out to the community, be it a band or council or some other body, and being truly community-based. As less than one-half of the key informants were satisfied with the level of community involvement in IIP projects, it appears that the NSDPs and most of the WAPs were not genuinely community-based projects. By extension, it cannot be said that IIP was truly a community-based initiative.

Additional consultation alone would likely not be adequate to remove completely the dissatisfaction with community involvement in IIP, found during this

evaluation. The dissatisfaction is likely more deeply rooted in the perception that communities lack ownership of the projects.

Closeness to the target group also affects the effectiveness of the client assessment and selection process. It is difficult for program staff who, although they might live in a community, are not necessarily from a community, to assess accurately all the aspects of persons, in the context of their family and community. This difficulty increases if there is a separation between the people who design projects and those who select participants as was the case with NSDPs, which were essentially designed centrally by the Colleges, while participant selection took place in the communities.

None of the NSDPs and only a few of the WAPs were designed specifically for an identified group of participants, as distinct from a type of participant such as hunters and trappers. This reduced the "fit" between the projects and the participants and likely contributed to the relatively high exit rates from IIP projects. It is suggested that future initiatives endeavour to tailor projects more closely to the needs of specific participant groups.

IIP did, however, adjust eligibility criteria to reflect local needs. Extending this flexibility by allowing communities to have more influence on the determination of the target group could, in the opinion of the evaluation team, enhance programs such as IIP further.

5.1.3 Multi-Year Time Frame

The low level of educational attainment of most IIP participants suggests the need for a long-term program commitment in order to have a significant impact on participants and communities. In this context IIP is but one step on the road to self-sufficiency for many participants.

There is a need for programs such as IIP to be positioned in a community as a stepping stone to other employment and training opportunities. The achievement of appropriate program coordination is difficult, however, if programs, such as ABE, are not available on a continuous basis in communities.

It is the view of the evaluation team that multi-year programming priorities to support community development may be more effective on the community level, rather than on a program level because there is more funding continuing on the community level as compared to individual programs. The prerequisites, of course, are that communities have access to and control over funds allocated to different programs, are able to move funds within spending envelopes, have

support in terms of information and skill development, and that an appropriate accountability framework is in place.

5.1.4 Management Information System and Program Accountability

IIP has strong financial but weak management information systems. This has implications for future programming as communities will need appropriate management information if they are to assume more responsibility for the delivery of integrated, multi-faceted community-based programs. Community-based managers will need information both to plan and manage programs and to be accountable to the providers of funding and their communities.

Management information systems only function if the projects supply the appropriate information. One of the frustrations of IIP staff is the difficulty they experience getting community-based project sponsors to provide the information outlined in the contribution agreements. The underlying cause of this difficulty may relate to a lack of ownership.

Compliance with information and accountability requirements tends to increase if project staff and sponsors can see a direct benefit, for example, by getting information back in a form that is meaningful from a project management perspective. Exit rates could be presented to projects with comparable rates for other projects in the region or for the NWT as a whole. Compliance will increase as well if payment of funding is linked to certain performance indicators that deal with reporting activities.

Related to management information issues is the question of how initiatives such as IIP should be evaluated in the future. In the opinion of the evaluation team, the framework for this evaluation would not be suitable in the context of communities having greater authority to address their own development needs. With program delivery shifting to communities in the north, there will need to be a corresponding shift to community-based monitoring and evaluation with an emphasis on measuring outcomes as they relate to goals set by communities.

5.1.5 Support Services

No matter what level of service integration is reached within programs like IIP, there will always be a need to address the requirements for appropriate support systems to ensure the success of community-based initiatives. This evaluation

found that a number of the problems that IIP experienced extend beyond individual IIP projects. Examples of some of the current weaknesses in broader support systems include: the absence of a full-time ABE training program (although there is a part-time program), the absence of full-time life skills teacher training, and a shortage of aboriginal instructors, especially in the western Arctic.

Enhanced services to support the community needs assessment process will be required as well. While the evaluation team recognizes that the GNWT has certainly made great strides toward gathering needed labour market information, it is the view of the evaluation team that further effort is required to integrate and format the available information so that it can be a useful planning tool for communities and community-based organizations. Indeed, the provision of relevant information to support community-level planning and monitoring activities and the provision of assistance to develop and implement appropriate planning and evaluation processes could be key roles of the GNWT in the context of increasing community-based programming — and community-based accountability — in the NWT.

5.2 Implicit Assumptions

The final part of this section addresses the implicit assumption in the design of IIP that all potential IIP participants need healing or at least personal development. The IIP handbook does not use such terms, but does state that, for example, life skills training is an integral part of all projects, as is personal and career counselling. Upon reflection, the evaluation team was struck as well by how strongly the underlying assumption that all participants need healing or personal development is evident in the evaluation framework and in the questionnaire that is a designed output of the evaluation activities. The latter includes, for example, impact definitions such as "helped me to lead a more healthy life" and "made me feel better about myself and my abilities".

The study team is well aware of the extensive needs among the target group and that, for example, the recent Annual General Meeting of the Native Women's Association passed a resolution recognizing that healing is integral to education. The study team questions, however, if it is appropriate for an initiative such as the IIP to assume implicitly that all participants need healing. Clearly, the program design should recognize the need for relevant services supporting participants' learning and work experiences. There are, however, individuals who are on social assistance mainly for economic reasons and whose dependency is related to the low level of economic development of their community. SARs programming should have the flexibility to accommodate such

people without assuming that their life skills are deficient or their self esteem is lacking.

6.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The IIP initiative is generally well received by and made a positive impact on the participants and their communities. It reaches out to community-based groups and forges some community-level inter-agency networks.

IIP represents a change towards more community-centred programming, without being a community-based initiative. It integrates upgrading, life skills, career and personal counselling within the projects, a clear step forward from the fragmented delivery of many government services at the community level.

The participants and their communities clearly benefit from the projects and there is a general desire on the part of the communities to have more IIP-type projects. That said, the communities express the desire to be more involved with the projects and there are indications that the more community-based WAPs were better received than the NSDPs, which are based in the Colleges. Lack of input from the communities and elders is frequently cited as one of the weaknesses of the initiative.

Although IIP integrates some components that have been delivered traditionally by different programs, there remains a lack of coordination with other services available to people in the communities. Most notably, the lack of coordination with the child care allowance system causes problems for many participants. In a broader context, IIP adds to the wide range of programming available to the communities and thus, from a community perspective, to the complexity of getting funded support services.

IIP projects are better at building skills and academic knowledge than at dealing with personal and cultural issues. This reflects that IIP emphasizes ABE and work placement, supported by life skills training and counselling. The initiative draws on the relatively rich ABE and life skills training resources, but experiences a lack of materials to support work placements. This latter resource constraint makes work placements, although well received by most respondents, less effective than they might have been.

Another important constraint relates to the limited orientation of instructors, project and work placement sponsors, and as well in many instances participants to the projects. A number of projects were implemented within very tight timeframes that hampered their eventual effectiveness.

The evaluation suggests a number of recommendations, including:

- more community involvement in the planning and execution of projects and amendment of planning timelines to allow for this;
- increased integration of the program with support services, such as child care allowances;
- more intense orientation of all people involved in the projects, including more instructor orientation to life skills training and counselling;
- retention of the attendance allowance and placing the allowances in the context of celebrating participants' involvement in projects;
- development of support materials to aid the implementation of work placements;
- development of a management information system that will assist day-to-day management of the projects and aid in ongoing self-monitoring; and
- increased linkages to other training and work placement opportunities for project graduates to make participants' training paths more seamless.

The evaluation findings can be interpreted within the context of the political move towards more community-based programming. The experience with IIP supports a number of observations that suggest that program effectiveness may well be enhanced by this move.

Future programming should build on a key IIP strength: the integration of a number of different services, such as ABE, work placement, personal and career counselling, and life skills training.

Future programming should extend the inter-agency cooperation that crystallized around IIP projects, especially in their start-up phases. Community-based programming should provide a yet stronger focus for inter-agency cooperation. It should try to avoid the insufficient coordination with other support services.

Any further move towards community-based programming will need to reflect the evaluation findings with respect to information systems. The IIP information systems show a financial or budget compliance bias and generally inadequate information needed on a day-to-day basis by project staff in the communities and other program staff. Community-based programming will need both financial and management information systems to work effectively and within a defined accountability framework.